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THE WORKS

OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

LIMITED EDITION

XIII.

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS

ARLATAN'S TREASURE

LA FÉDOR

Of the LIMITED EDITION of Alphonse Daudet one thousand copies have been printed for America.

This copy is Number 341

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THE WORKS OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

ARLATAN'S TREASURE

AND

LA FÉDOR

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE BURNHAM IVES

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY P. G. JEANNIOT

BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1899

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Photogravured by Goupil & Co., Paris, from a Drawing by P. G. Jeanniot.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

WHEN this volume of fugitive articles, mainly reminiscent, was given to the public, in 1888, almost exactly thirty years had passed since the epoch-marking incident in Daudet's life to which the opening article is devoted. Ernest Daudet fixes for us the time of his brother's arrival in Paris as the early part of November 1857, when he was about seventeen and a half years old;[1] and his first appearance in print — the publication of *Les Amoureuses*, the volume of verses many of which he had brought with him from the provinces — did not take place until the following year. His journey to Paris and his arrival Daudet had already described in the first chapter of the second part of *Little What's-His-Name* — the chapter called *Mes Caoutchoucs*, with which the quasi-autobiographical part of that story ends. If we read Ernest Daudet's affectionate and admiring tribute to his brother in connection with the "history" of *Little What's-His-Name* in this volume, and with that story itself, we cannot fail, it seems to me, to be convinced that there have been few auto-

[1] *My Brother and I*, Chap. XVI.

biographies in the guise of fiction in which the general outline of the narrative is so closely in accord with actual fact, as in this case of Daniel Eyssette and Alphonse Daudet; and the result is that we have — the three supplementing one another — an extremely full and satisfactory biography of the novelist down to the beginning of his literary career. The first few years in Paris are described very briefly by the older brother, who has almost nothing to say of his brother's life after his marriage; and, as his little book was published in 1881, the last sixteen years of Alphonse Daudet's life are left untouched by him. He feels bound, he says, not to forestall the account which Alphonse may give for himself, either in his memoirs or in the story of his works. It is to be regretted that he exercised this self-restraint, for the only memoirs which his brother has left behind, so far as appears, are contained, with the histories of his books, in this volume and its companion — *Memories of a Man of Letters*, — and, vastly entertaining as these reminiscences are, and most illuminating as to his character and temperament and methods of work; and though they are written, as has been said, with infinite talent and with his unfailing humor, they are sadly lacking in material for anything like an adequate biography of the man.

Les Amoureuses, already referred to, was published in 1859, when Daudet was not yet twenty years of age, and many of the poems had been written long before; his next volume, *La Double*

Conversion, a "tale in verse," appeared in 1861. These, with the exception of some fugitive pieces, published in newspapers or written in albums, were his only ventures in the field of poetry, and the volumes are principally sought by collectors.

During the interval between the publication of *Les Amoureuses* and that of *La Double Conversion*, a very marked change had taken place in Daudet's position and prospects; he was no longer the timid, diffident Little What's-His-Name; he had become acquainted with Villemessant, had made his mark in the columns of *Le Figaro*, which, says M. Ernest Daudet, "was a sort of consecration for an author, a brevet accorded to talent;" and he had, in 1860, accepted a position in the office of the Duc de Morny, President of the Corps Législatif, then and until his death one of the most powerful men in France. Although Daudet had not then seen the last of his Bohemian days, he had gone beyond the point where, if ever, he was in danger of falling to the level of many of those with whom he was thrown in contact; he had passed among them and come forth unscathed, "having lost none of his talent, having left behind none of the bloom of his youth, the freshness of his soul, the uprightness of his heart."[1]

The publication of *Les Amoureuses* called forth an extremely eulogistic article in *Le Moniteur* by M. Édouard Thierry, and may be said to have

[1] *My Brother and I*, Chap. XVI.

opened the columns of the newspapers to its author. It was not long after that *Le Figaro* (November 24, 1859) published his first article as *chroniqueur fantaisiste*, a study entitled *Les Gueux de Province*, in which he described the miseries of provincial school ushers. "This page, glowing with reminiscences of his personal experience and written with great emotion," says an anonymous writer in Larousse, "placed Daudet in full communication with the public."

In 1862, Daudet's third volume was issued by the house of Michel Lévy Frères. It contained, under the general title of *The Romance of Red Riding Hood, Scenes and Fancies*, six sketches: *The Romance of Red-Riding-Hood, The Souls of Paradise, The Trumpet and the Trumpeter, The Eight Mrs. Bluebeards, An Examination for Charenton, The Nightingales of the Cemetery.* In some subsequent editions, the *Adventures of a Butterfly and a Beetle*[1] was included with these sketches.

"What other than that incorrigible poet Little What's-His-Name would be capable of writing stories so chimerical, so intangible as *The Adventures of a Butterfly*, etc., *The Romance of Red-Riding-Hood*, and *The Souls of Paradise?*" asks M. Jules Lemaître; and, after a very brief *résumé* of the last-named sketch, he continues:

"There you have a mystery which smells a little of heresy; for the Church teaches not only that the elect will forget the damned, but that the

[1] From *Little What's-His-Name*, Part 2, Chap. VIII.

damned will abhor the elect (I do not commend this as an amiable dogma). But there is in this heterodox fantasy, so compromising to St. Peter, an altogether appetizing mixture of ingenuousness, grace and passion." [1]

It was in the office of the President of the Corps Législatif that Daudet met M. Ernest l'Épine, who "managed M. de Morny's office," and in collaboration with whom he wrote the next of his published works, in a hitherto untried field. In 1862 Michel Lévy Frères issued the "*Last Idol*, drama in one act, in prose, by MM. E. l'Épine and A. Daudet." The play, was first performed at the Odéon February 4, 1862, and the occasion is described by M. Ernest Daudet.[2] Alphonse had been compelled to leave Paris because of the condition of his health, and had passed the winter in Algiers, where, as he tells us in this volume,[3] he received the news of the first performance and was so stirred thereby that he forgot health and prudence in his longing to see Paris once more. While the play was not an absolute failure, it achieved no marked success; a *succès de douces larmes* is the most emphatic expression I have seen applied to it, and the *douces larmes* of the masqueraders on their way to Bullier seem to have impressed the author most vividly at the performance he witnessed on the night of his arrival in Paris: Mardi Gras, 1862.

[1] *Les Contemporains, Études et Portraits Littéraires*, 2d Series.
[2] *My Brother and I*, Chap. XVIII.
[3] Chapter entitled "My First Play."

In 1863 *The Absent* made its appearance from the press of Dupray de la Mahérie. This thin volume of 43 pages is very rare, and is highly valued by collectors. A copy presented by the author is inscribed:

"This is the copy of Paul Arène, my little Abbé Galiani.
"ALPHONSE DAUDET."

In 1865 *The Absent*, which in its original form was called a *proverb*, was published by Lévy as a comic opera in one act, words by M. Alphonse Daudet, music by M. Ferdinand Poise. There are divers variations between the two, and the *dénouement* is not the same.

The opera was first performed at the Opéra-Comique, October 26, 1864.

The second of the plays written by Daudet and l'Épine in collaboration was published by Lévy in 1865, under the title of *The White Carnation*, comedy in one act, in prose. The play had originally been called the *Lily*, but both the title and the *dénouement* — an émigré shot by a platoon of soldiers and shouting "*Vive le Roi!*" the while — failed to please the censorship of the Empire, so that the *Lily*, momentarily a *White Dahlia*, finally became the *White Carnation*, and as such was performed at the Comédie-Française, April 8, 1865.

The Elder Brother, the last of the joint productions of Daudet and l'Épine, was published by Lévy in 1868. The play, a "drama in one act"

had been produced at the Vaudeville, December 19, 1867, but obtained only a *succès d'estime.*

The same year (1868) was marked by the publication in book form of the first of those masterpieces upon which Daudet's fame rests secure. *Little What's-His-Name,*[1] *the Story of a Child* had appeared in serial form in the *Petit Moniteur Universel,* beginning with the number of the 27th November, 1866. The volume was published by Hetzel.

In 1881 MM. Dentu and Charpentier undertook an octavo edition of the "Complete Works" of Daudet, with illustrations, the publication continuing slowly until 1887, when the eighth, which proved to be the last, volume was issued. Each work was preceded by its history, written by the author especially for this edition. The first volume, *Fromont and Risler,* was published in 1881; *Jack, Jack* (conclusion) and *Robert Helmont* in one volume, and *Little What's-His-Name* in 1882; *Tartarin de Tarascon* and *Letters from My Mill* in one volume, in 1884; *Kings in Exile* in 1885, *The Nabob* in 1886, and *Numa Roumestan* in 1887. The "histories" written for this edition are to be found in the present volume and its companion, with two exceptions, namely that of the *Nabob,* and that of *Robert Helmont,* which latter has become a preface and occupies its appropriate place as such.

It is impossible to exaggerate the charm of these histories, which are absolutely unique and by the

[1] *Le Petit Chose.*

aid of which we seem actually to see the author at work. I venture to suggest that it is the very noticeable presence of that distinguishing quality of all Daudet's work which has been well called the "personal note,"[1] which makes these papers, all things considered, the most entertaining and absorbing of the contents of this volume, which has itself been declared by some critics to be the most entertaining of all Daudet's works.

Little What's-His-Name, we are told, is "an echo of my childhood and my youth." A purely bibliographical introduction is not perhaps a proper place to make or to answer criticisms of the quality of Daudet's work, but I cannot forbear a protest against the criticism that the autobiographical element in *Little What's-His-Name* is a blemish, "because the real incidents of the author's life are presented too much as they actually occurred."[2] Who could say, without the assistance furnished by Daudet himself and his brother, what incidents are told as they actually occurred? And does the information given by them go beyond this: that the first part of the *History of a Child* is, *in its general outline*, and only therein, the history of a particular child named Alphonse Daudet, even as the *Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger* was "an echo of the childhood and youth" of Charles Dickens?[3]

[1] Henry James in *Partial Portraits*, p. 210.

[2] Adolphe Cohn in the *Bookman*.

[3] On this point Daudet's own testimony cannot fail to be interesting, if not conclusive. On Monday, September 25, 1886,

The original edition of *Little What's-His-Name*, without an indication of the impression (of which there were some seven or eight), is very rare. "M. Daudet gave some complimentary copies to his friends. One was inscribed: 'To my friend Cladet, *alias* Popis, *alias* La Bataille.' When this copy was offered for sale, some ten years ago, there was a rumor that it had been stolen. On another copy we read: 'Copy belonging to my friend Duchesne, who did not steal it.' Strangely enough — but it is a fact — these two copies are to-day in the same hands; the collector who owns them paid an average of 25 francs each."[1]

This first extended work of M. Daudet was reprinted by Hetzel in 1878, in the form of a special edition for children, with numerous illustrations. It also formed volume two of the *Works of Alphonse Daudet*, which Lemerre began to publish as an

Edmond de Goncourt writes in his Journal: "To-day in our daily ante-breakfast chat, Daudet deplored the fact that he wrote *Le Petit Chose* when he was too young. He told me all that he would put in it to-day, and added: 'I was unfortunate enough to meet some one to whom I read the beginning of my book, and who told me that it was childish. That impelled me to stuff it with imaginary details, and adventures, and prevented me from putting into it the whole of my real childhood in the Lyonnais.'"

[1] M. Jules Brivois, *Essai de Bibliographie des Œuvres de M. Alphonse Daudet, avec Fragments Inédits.* In the Preface to this little book, which is invaluable to all those who are interested in its subject, M. Brivois says: "I have tried to supplement, by a work of pure bibliography, the works of M. Alphonse Daudet — *Thirty Years in Paris* and *Memories of a Man of Letters*, published in 1888 — bringing my investigations down to the present day." Unluckily the present day was December, 1894.

édition définitive in 1879, two years before the appearance of the first volume of the Dentu-Charpentier edition referred to above. This Lemerre edition was much more complete than the Charpentier edition; it extended to eighteen volumes, the last of which[1] appeared in 1891.

Little What's-His-Name was followed in 1869 by *Letters from My Mill; Impressions and Memories*, whose "history," as it appeared in the Charpentier edition, will be found in this volume.

The original edition contained nineteen letters or tales. Subsequent reprints — Volume I. of the Lemerre edition (1879), Volume V. of the Dentu-Charpentier edition (1884), and a later duodecimo edition (Charpentier, 1887), contain, in addition, five tales originally published with *Robert Helmont*, in the series entitled *Études et Paysages*, namely *The Stars*, *The Oranges*, *The Locusts*, *Custom-House People* and *In Camargue*, and one, *The Three Low Masses*, which had first appeared in the second edition of *Monday Tales* (Charpentier, 1876).[2]

The *Letters from My Mill* were dedicated to Mme. Daudet (Mlle. Julie Allard), to whom the author had been married two years before.[3]

[1] *Thirty Years in Paris*, including much of the first edition of *Memories of a Man of Letters*.

[2] The *Three Low Masses* was afterward published with *La Belle Nivernaise* (1886); in this edition it is restored to the *Monday Tales*.

[3] "They (the *Letters from My Mill*) had to my mind an extraordinary charm," says Mr. Henry James; "they put me quite on the side of Alphonse Daudet, whatever he might do in the future."

In this same year (1869) *The Sacrifice* was performed at the Vaudeville. With the exception of the unimportant comic opera, the *Absent* (1863), it was Daudet's first essay as a dramatist without the collaboration of l'Épine, and it was also the first play in which he had ventured beyond one act. It was published in the *Nouvelle Bibliothèque Dramatique* in 1869.

The second volume of "letters," so-called, *Lettres à un Absent*, was published in 1871 by Lemerre. It contained twenty-one sketches of which five now appear in *Memories of a Man of Letters*, namely, *The Francs-Tireurs*, *Les Évadés de Paris* (*An Escape*), *The Garden on Rue des Rosiers*, *The Summer Palace* and *The Shipwreck*. Of the remaining sixteen, seven — *The Surrender*, *The Dictators*, *A Mushroom Bed of Great Men*, *Rochefort and Rossignol*, *The Sentry-Box*, *The Knitters* and *A Year of Trouble* have never been reprinted in French, while the other nine were included in the second edition of the *Monday Tales;* and this, the author's latest arrangement, has been adhered to in this edition, only the seven sketches named above as having never been reprinted being included under the original title, and appended to *Letters from My Mill.*

The majority of the *Lettres à un Absent* had appeared in *Le Soir*, in February, March, April and May, 1871. *A Year of Trouble*, which was written by Mme. Daudet, may be found in the number of that journal for Sept. 23, 1871, with the sub-title: "Notes of a Parisienne."

The Defence of Tarascon, which is one of the most famous of all Daudet's shorter pieces, was reprinted on Japan paper by Lahure, in 1886, in a "*délicieuse plaquette*," of about fifty pages, illustrated by sixteen drawings engraved by the Gillot process and colored. Very few copies were printed and the book was never regularly offered for sale.

The Prodigious Adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon, after the diversified experience related by the author in his "history" of that work, were given to the world in 1872, in a volume bearing the imprint of Dentu. As we are told by M. Ernest Daudet, the materials for the Algerian portions of the story were gathered at the time of the trip to Algiers in 1861–62, which was brought so suddenly to a close by the news of the successful performance of *The Last Idol*. The author tells us that the book was not written until 1869, but in 1863 or thereabout *Figaro* published *Chapatin the Lion-Killer*, which was nothing less than *Tartarin* in embryo.

During the year 1872 Daudet made two more ventures into the dramatic field, resulting in the production of two plays, one of which is by common consent the worst, and the other in some respects the best of all his efforts in that line. *Lise Tavernier*, a drama in five acts and seven tableaux, was played at the Ambigu-Comique on January 29, 1872, and was published by Dentu. It can hardly be said to have obtained even what

is somewhat vaguely called a *succès d'estime*, and was not deemed worthy a place in the single volume of plays included in the Lemerre collected edition.[1]

L'Arlésienne (*Woman of Arles*), a play in three acts and five tableaux, with symphonies and choruses by G. Bizet, was first performed at the Vaudeville, October 1, 1872, and was published by Lemerre. In his history of *Fromont and Risler*, Daudet has described the part played by the *Arlésienne* in determining the destiny of the more famous work; how, as he sat listening to a rehearsal, he reflected that the Parisians would soon weary of hearing him chatter about grasshoppers, the maids of Arles, the mistral, and his mill, and that it was time to arouse their interest by a work that would come nearer to them and their everyday life; how he then and there determined to place his next drama amid the laborious activity of that business quarter, the Marais; and how the resplendent failure of the little play, despite the "prettiest music in the world," led to his determination to write no more dramas and to transform *Fromont*, which was already mapped out in his brain, into a novel. *L'Arlésienne* did, in truth, "score a failure," and received only three performances at that time; but Daudet's generous appreciation of the music was not fully shared by the public, and Bizet was partly responsible with Daudet for the fate of the play. The judgment of

[1] See *My Brother and I*, p. 444.

1872 has been reviewed, however, in later years, and somewhat modified, and M. Ernest Daudet's estimate of the work seems to have been justified in the lapse of time. It was reproduced with more satisfactory results at the Odéon, May 5, 1885, which fact is recorded in a second edition of the play.[1] "We may safely predict," says a recent writer, "that great renown awaits the shade of Alphonse Daudet by reason of the *Arlésienne*."[2] The play is little more than an elaboration of the tale with the same name included among the *Letters from my Mill.*

In 1873, Dentu issued, under the general title of *Monday Tales* (*Contes du Lundi*), a volume containing a collection of thirty-one short sketches, most of which had previously appeared in one or another newspaper. Some of these are among the most familiar of all Daudet's works, and two, *The Last Class* and *The Siege of Berlin*,[3] have figured for several years in the list of books required to be read in preparation for admission to Harvard College.

Monday Tales. New Edition revised and considerably augmented. So reads the title-page of a

[1] "My copy," says M. Brivois, "bears the following autograph address: 'To Madame la Comtesse de Chambrun the touching and refined interpreter of Rose Mamaï. Her respectful and grateful *Alph. Daudet.*'"

[2] Gustave Geffroy, *Le Théâtre d'Alphonse Daudet*, in *La Revue Encyclopédique*, January 15, 1898.

[3] *The Siege of Berlin* first appeared in *Lettres à un Absent* (*supra*), to which collection it has been restored in this edition.

volume issued by Charpentier in 1876. It contains all the thirty-one tales included in the earlier edition, nine others taken from the *Lettres à un Absent*, and two previously *unpublished* pieces: *The Three Low Masses* and *The Harvest by the Sea-shore*, both of which are included in the *Monday Tales* by the present publishers. This edition was preceded by an advertisement by the publisher, stating in effect that, as the author did not propose to republish the volume entitled *Lettres à un Absent*, he had borrowed therefrom a few reminiscences of a purely anecdotal character.

Beginning in May 1873, F. Polo published a series of fifteen *livraisons* under the general title of *Contes et Récits*, containing in all thirty articles, of which only two, *Le Bon Dieu de Chemillé* and the *New Master* had not been previously published. The other twenty-eight were all taken from *Lettres à un Absent* and *Contes du Lundi*. *Le Bon Dieu de Chemillé* was reprinted with the first edition of *Robert Helmont* (1874) as one of the *Études et Paysages*, printed in this edition in the volume with *Port Tarascon*. *The New Master* was reprinted with *La Belle Nivernaise* in 1886.

An interesting detail is given by Brivois: in the first impression of the sixth *livraison*, at page 93, there is an engraving after a drawing by Gill, representing Bazaine playing billiards. In subsequent copies, in which this engraving is missing, we read in the middle of the page: "Illustration prohibited by the censorship." At

this time Bazaine was at Île Sainte-Marguerite under sentence of twenty years' imprisonment for treason. He escaped in the following year.[1]

Artists' Wives, a collection of twelve studies of marital infelicity from various points of view, was the next volume from Daudet's pen to be offered to the public. It was published by Lemerre in 1874, and, so far as I have been able to learn, none of the twelve had previously appeared, even in newspapers. The original edition was entitled *First Series*, but no other series has ever been published.

In the same year appeared *Robert Helmont*, with the exception of *Little What's-His-Name* and *Tartarin of Tarascon*, the longest single work thus far put forth by Daudet. In the same covers were numerous tales, studies, etc., collected under the general title of *Études et Paysages*. The volume was published by Dentu; in 1888 the same publisher issued a new edition (octavo) of *Robert Helmont* alone, with many illustrations; and in 1891 a reduced copy (12mo) of the same, with the same illustrations. With its former companions (*Études et Paysages*), — except those that had already been reprinted in *Letters from My Mill* (Volume I.), — and with *Artists' Wives*, it forms Volume VII. of the Lemerre collected edition; and, with the second part of *Jack*, Volume III. of the Dentu-Charpentier edition (1882) of the "Complete Works." In this last-named volume it

[1] See *The Lesson in History* (*infra*), p. 359.

is preceded by its "history," written for this edition, which appears, in the shape of a *Preface* in the later editions and in the present edition in English.

Robert Helmont originally appeared in the *Musée Universel.* Of the *Études et Paysages*, none except *Le Bon Dieu de Chemillé*, had ever before been published, save in newspapers, and none, save those which were added to the *Letters from My Mill*, have ever been reprinted, except in the Lemerre collected edition, and in one or more of the collections entitled *Contes Choisis*, to which more extended reference will be made in the introduction to *Memories of a Man of Letters.* Among them were several, for example the *Death of the Duc de M——*, and *A Nabob*, which were afterward elaborated in the novels.

With the publication of the *Études et Paysages*, Daudet abandoned for many years, substantially forever, the style of composition which had given him even then, when he was but little past thirty, an enviable fame. *Tartarin*, though in form a continued story, is in reality but a succession of sketches in which, as his custom was, he describes, albeit with transparent exaggeration and with a more rollicking humor than usual, what he, the most ardent and loyal of Southerners,[1] had himself

[1] "'My Provence!' he said to me one day; 'people ask me if I love her, if I regret her! Why, I am dying of love and longing for her!'"

M. Auguste Marin in the *Revue Encyclopédique* of January 15, 1898.

seen and observed of one aspect of the Southern character.

Enough has been said of the confusing transfer of these shorter pieces from one collection to another to show how difficult a task it is to prepare an absolutely complete edition of them all. Although Daudet had not Balzac's extraordinary craze for revising and remodelling and transferring whole chapters and episodes from one novel to another, the sudden transformation of an *Étude* or *Paysage* into a *Letter from My Mill*, or of a *Lettre à un Absent* into a *Monday Tale* inevitably reminds one of the way in which, as the *Human Comedy* increased in bulk and scope, the different *Scenes* were transferred from one category to another, from *Parisian Life* to *Private Life* or to the *Études Philosophiques*. The collector who should attempt to secure all of Daudet's miscellaneous works in French, without duplicates, would be as badly off as one who had undertaken to collect a similar set of the writings of Rudyard Kipling. The list of publishers with whom Daudet had been associated in these first fifteen years of his literary career reaches the somewhat extraordinary number of nine or ten.

On the 25th of March, 1874, the. newspaper called *Le Bien Public* began the publication of *Fromont and Risler*, and later in the year, when this publication was concluded, a *special impression* of the novel, printed in double columns, was made from the original type made up into pages, and issued from the office of that newspaper.

Such was the first appearance of the work with which Alphonse Daudet definitively won his great popularity, which endured without perceptible diminution to the day of his death, twenty-three years later, whatever the worshippers of the Academy may have dreamed for a moment, after the publication of *The Immortal* in 1888.

Close on the heels of this *special impression*, and in the same year, Charpentier[1] issued what we must call the original edition of *Fromont and Risler*. It was published at the sacramental price of 3 fr. 50, to be read on the back of all the familiar yellow-covered volumes of the "Bibliothèque Charpentier," and was worth in 1894 something like ten times that amount, according to M. Brivois, who records some interesting details concerning two copies. — "M. Paul de Boissy . . . once owned a copy at the head of which was the following interesting autograph: 'This copy of the first edition of *Fromont*, which I happened upon by chance, moves me deeply as I turn the leaves. My first great success — when I had my health, all my dear ones still living — ah! how light-hearted I was and how proud to be alive, when this copy came from the printer!

"'ALPHONSE DAUDET, 1890.'

"At the sale after the death of Adolphe Belot (April 1891), a copy of the fifteenth edition (dated 1876) was offered, bearing on the fly-leaf

[1] It is worth noting that this is the first appearance of this house as Daudet's publishers.

the following curious imprecation in the author's hand:

"'A MON (*sic*) ADOLPHE BELOT.

"' *Vers pour être chantés.*

"'Adolphe contempteur des Dieux,
Tu mourras foudroyé par leur main vengeresse;
Ils paieront d'un trépas odieux
Ta violence et ta paresse.

"'Mais Priape, Dieu des jardins,
Touché par le constant homage de ton culte,
Par ton amour des fleurs et des livres badins,
Priera pour toi ces Dieux que ton cynisme insulte.

"' *Musique de* LULLI; paroles d' ALPHONSE DAUDET.' "[1]

Fromont was dedicated to "the two poets, Jules and Léonide Allard. In testimony of my filial respect." The two poets were Mme. Daudet's father and mother, the latter of whom was, during the novelist's later years, a cherished member of his family.

[1] "TO MY (*sic*) ADOLPHE BELOT.

"*Lines to be sung.*

"Adolphe, thou scorner of the Gods,
Struck down by their avenging hand, thou 'lt die;
They 'll pay thee with a death detestable,
For all thy violence and indolence.

"But Priapus, the god of gardens fair,
Touched by the constant homage of thy adoration,
And by thy love of flowers and sportive books,
Will pray forgiveness for thee from these Gods
Whom thou dost with thy cynic ways insult.

"Music by LULLI; words by ALPHONSE DAUDET."

A reprint of this original edition, issued in 1876 (the "fifteenth edition" mentioned in the foregoing quotation), bore the inscription: "*Ouvrage Couronné par l'Académie Française*," an honor accorded to none of the author's subsequent books.

In the Lemerre collected edition, heretofore mentioned many times, *Fromont and Risler* forms Volume IV. (1884), and in the Dentu-Charpentier edition, preceded by "the history of this book," Volume I. (1881).

Jack, the second in order of publication of the series of novels properly so called, and the longest of all M. Daudet's works, began to appear in the *Moniteur Universel*, in June (15th), 1875, although, as the author himself tells us, he had not then completed the story and did not complete it until late in October. It had taken him nearly a year, and yet it was the "most quickly written" of all his books.

Jack was issued in two volumes by Dentu in 1876. It filled two volumes (5 and 6) of the Lemerre collected edition (1885) and Volumes II. and III. (with *Robert Helmont*) of the Dentu-Charpentier edition of the "Complete Works" (1882), wherein it was preceded by its "history," written especially for this edition.

I suspend at this point the chronological sketch of Daudet's works, to take it up anew, with the publication of the *Nabob*, in the introduction to

the *Memories of a Man of Letters.* A word or two may be said, however, concerning the various papers contained in *Thirty Years in Paris*, and concerning the later sketches printed therewith in this volume.

As to the former, they were written at divers times, most of them probably, always excepting the "histories of my books," before 1881; and the greater number, if not all, had been published prior to the first appearance of this volume, in 1888. Writing in 1881, M. Ernest Daudet says: "He (Alphonse) has spoken in the pages of his memoirs which have already been published of the first weeks of his sojourn in Paris, with a penetrating melancholy." And he proceeds to quote that passage of the first chapter which begins with the words: "With the exception of my brother, I knew no one." [1]

The article on Villemessant, we are told in a note, was written in 1879; an episode taken from *Little-What's-His-Name*, entitled *The First Coat*, was published in the volume with *La Belle Nivernaise* (Marpon and Flammarion) in 1886.

The histories of *Little-What's-His-Name* and the other books were written, as we have seen, especially for the Dentu-Charpentier edition of Daudet's "Complete Works," begun in 1881.

The article on the *Literary Salons* first appeared in the *Novoë Vremya* of St. Petersburg in 1879; Daudet's introduction to Mmes. Ancelot, Wal-

[1] *Infra*, p. 7; *My Brother and I*, p. 408.

dor, and Chodsko belongs to the very early years of his residence in Paris, when he was known solely as the author of *Les Amoureuses*.[1]

In the history of *Numa Roumestan*[2] we are told that some features of the character of Valmajour in that novel are authentic, — for example, the little phrase: "It came to me, at night," etc., "taken down word for word, from his ingenuous lip," and that the original of the character was "that Draguignanais whom my dear and great Mistral sent to me one day with these words: 'I send Buisson, *tambourinaire*, to you; pilot him.'" "But," says Daudet, "the real truth, which I could not tell in his lifetime for fear of injuring him, I may tell now that death has burst his drum, *pécaïre!* and stuffed with black earth the three holes of his flute. Buisson was only a bogus *tambourinaire*, a petty bourgeois from the south, a town clarinetist or bugler," etc. — An episode of *Numa Roumestan*, under the title of *My Drummer*, was published in the third collection of *Contes Choisis*, in 1884, but the story of Buisson seems never to have appeared, unless in some newspaper, until the publication of *Thirty Years in Paris*.

In connection with the history of the *Letters from my Mill*, where he tells of his visits to his friends the *Félibres* and of their journeyings together, it may be said that in 1868 Daudet's name appears as the translator (from Provençal into

[1] See *My Brother and I*, *p.* 412.
[2] *Memories of a Man of Letters.*

French) of Roumanille's *Lou Mège de Cucugnan*,[1] published by the *Librairie Internationale;* and that he himself occasionally ventured to write in the mellifluous *langue d'oc* is evidenced by the "epigraph" prefixed to *Arlatan's Treasure*, printed in this volume.

A most interesting account of some of the escapades in which Daudet took part with the brotherhood of Provençal poets, as given by Mistral in *Armana prouvençau*, a "popular almanac," is reproduced by M. Auguste Marin in an article entitled *La Jeunesse de Daudet*, in the *Revue Encyclopédique* of January 15, 1898. Only a short time before his death, he says, Daudet sat one day at his desk, turning the leaves of a copy of the almanac, fresh from Provence and exhaling an odor of seaweed.

"Whenever his eye caught a forgotten word, a picturesque phrase, in the little pamphlet composed by *trouvères*, who transform themselves into writers once a year without laying aside the hammer or the plough, he uttered a joyful exclamation; all his youthful memories throbbed at his temples; he found anew the accent of the soil with which to speak of Mistral, Roumanille and Aubanel. . . .

"Mistral relates that the author of *Les Prunes* (Daudet had then published nothing save a volume of poems, *Les Amoureuses*) was secretary to the Duc de Morny, a sort of 'honorary secretary'

[1] *The Physician of Cucugnan.*

evidently, for he went but once a month to see if his master, who presided over the Senate, was in good health and humor. Daudet was a comely youth, dark but with little color, with a silky beard just sprouting, and rampant hair. It was this too independent hair which disturbed the duke: 'Well, poet,' he would say, 'how about that underbrush, when are we going to have it cut?'

"'*Next week*,' the poet would reply.

"But when the next week came the hair was more bushy than ever; it overgrew the forehead and the cheeks; it became a wild tangle; and the duke fell instead of the hair. But this independent attitude was not assumed by Daudet with his haughty superior alone. He was fond of playing *casse-cou;* he plunged headlong, says Mistral, into everything that savored of life, light, noise and merriment.

"One evening, when they were supping together at the *Chêne-Vert*, a cabaret in the outskirts of Avignon, Daudet discovered that there was dancing at a neighboring house, at the foot of the terrace where the two friends sat at table. He gave one leap, from a height of three metres, through the trellis-work which concealed the dancers, and dropped, like the devil, into the midst of the ball. Another time, while crossing the bridge over the Bartelasse, he began to run along the parapet, at the risk of falling into the stream, and to horrify some worthy bourgeois who stopped to look, he cried: 'Tonnerre! it was from here that we threw

Brune's dead body into the river! yes, Maréchal Brune's! and let this serve as an example to the Frenchmen and Allobrogi who would harass us anew!'

"But the anecdote in which the future author of the *Letters from My Mill* is most fully revealed, is that of a walk through Arles, and a dinner at 'Trenquetaille,'—a revel! They (Mistral and Daudet, with Anselme Mathieu and the painter Grivolas) had taken it into their heads to have a feast *à la Provençale*, and they went about in search of a signless inn, through the narrow streets of Arles, where the old houses are whitewashed to the first floor and are always clean and fresh; where the 'Arlesian queens' smile at the passers-by from behind the light curtains at their doors. When they reached La Poissonnerie, toward nightfall, they asked an old woman, who was knitting stockings, if she knew of a little inn in the neighborhood where one could dine cleanly and *à la bonne apostolique*. The gossip, scenting a *galéjade*, called the neighbors, who showed their shrewd faces crowned with the white *cravate au chignon*. And each one commended the comely wayfarers to some inn whose name showed that they were laughing at them. But a stout man, who sat on a stone smoking his pipe, saw by the piteous manner of the four comrades that they were not making sport of the fishwives, and he offered to take them to the cabaret on the other side of the Rhone, at which the boatmen generally stopped.

"'I own my own boat,' he said, 'and I have followed the sea many years.'

"'Have you made long voyages?' said Daudet, as they followed the worthy man.

"'Oh! I have sailed mostly on small coasting craft; but if the Holy Marys had n't always had an eye on us, many 's the time we should have gone to the bottom, shipmates! I am Captain Gafet, at your service, when you want to go down the river.'

"They crossed the Rhone to the inn of Trenquetaille, where fifteen or twenty boatmen were already seated in front of a roast kid. The hostess, dismayed at the sight of such well-dressed guests, put some eels on the fire none the less, and, to whet their appetite, placed on the table some fine Bellegarde onions, a dish of peppers in vinegar, goat's-milk cheese wrapped in a walnut leaf, salted mullet roes and some bits of delicious codfish broiled over the embers.

"Daudet, who had never in his life been present at a Camarguese debauch, bravely attacked a great red onion, ate it with cheese and codfish, and consumed it; and as his companions were not to be outdone, Captain Gafet was kept busy filling the glasses, remarking that onions made one drink and kept the thirst alive.

"Meanwhile the boatmen, having made an end of their kid, were finishing their meal, according to the custom of Rhone watermen, with a plate of greasy soup. Having poured in a glass of wine,

each man held his plate in both hands and drank the mixture so. Then they began to sing. Daudet must needs do his part, a lively ballad, as old and light as the good wine. But the hostess was terribly afraid that she would be reported to the police for permitting such an uproar at night.

"'The police, the guard,' cried Daudet, 'oh! they have no terrors for us. Go and fetch the register in which you write the names of those who lodge in your inn; you 'll see who we are!'

"And the wine-inspired singer, whose rustic tastes were so in evidence, wrote on the blank page: 'Alphonse Daudet, secretary to the President of the Senate; Mistral, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; Anselme Mathieu, *Félibre* of Châteauneuf-du-Pape; Grivolas, master-painter of the School of Avignon.'

"'Now,' said he with dignity to the old woman, 'if any one undertakes to make trouble for you, whether he be commissioner, gendarme, or subprefect, you need only put these fly-tracks under his nose. And if he molests you, just write to Paris. *Baste!* I will undertake to make him dance!'

"'We took our leave,' Mistral adds, 'accompanied by public veneration, like princes who have just made themselves known. But on Trenquetaille bridge, which was then a bridge of boats,—

"'"Suppose we dance a farandole," says Daudet. "That 's the only proper way to cross a bridge in Provence."

"'Suddenly — we were half way across the Rhone — just before us, in the half-light, appears a procession of sweet damsels of Arles, each with her mate, walking slowly along, chattering and laughing. The rustling of the silk dresses, the amorous cooing of the pairs, in the placid evening air impregnated with the warm breath of the Rhone, all were caressing to the senses.

"'"A wedding-party," said the captain, who had not left us.

"'"A wedding-party?" echoed Daudet. With his imperfect sight he did not know the source of all this noise. "An Arlesian wedding! A wedding by moonlight! A wedding on the Rhone!"

"'And like a madman, our *Levantine* darted forward, threw his arms around the bride's neck, and, if you please, such kisses!

"'Ah! my friends in the Lord! Twenty resolute young blades surrounded us, pressed us close, brandishing their fists and shouting:

"'"Into the Rhone!"

"'But Captain Gafet rushed into the mêlée. "*Qu'es aco?*" he said, most opportunely. "Don't you see that they 've been drinking at Trenquetaille, to the health of the married pair, and that it would be bad for them to drink any more?"

"'"*Vivent les mariés!*" they shouted, one and all, with great good-will. Thanks to the brawn and presence of mind of honest Gafet, whom all the young men knew, we were allowed to cross the bridge.'

"He was a true, a pure Provençal, and Mistral writes in his graceful way: 'The lioness will never bear a grudge because her cub scratches her a little, in play.'

"Alphonse Daudet knew," adds M. Marin, "that only the Tartarins, the Roumestans and the Aunt Portals harbored malice against him in a country where 'everybody is a little Tarasconian.'"

As we have already seen, the play referred to in the title of the next of these papers is *The Last Idol*, written in collaboration with M. l'Épine and performed for the first time in the spring of 1862, in the absence of the author, but in the presence of M. le Duc de Morny, in whose department of the government both of the authors were employed. This paper had never been published in book form until the appearance of *Thirty Years in Paris;* the charming reminiscence of his Algerian wanderings, interrupted in the valley of the Chelif by the arrival of the Spahi with the telegraphic message for "Sidi Daoudi," which had been following him from camp to camp all the way from Milianah, is well worthy a place among the *Études et Paysages.*

Dealing as it does with a man still conspicuously prominent in contemporary French politics, the article on Henri Rochefort has a more intense *present* interest than most of Daudet's work. It was no longer ago than the election of M. Loubet to the presidency of the Republic that the founder of *La Lanterne* forced himself upon public atten-

tion as he has never failed to do on any occasion of more than ordinary interest for many years past. The paper was written for the same St. Petersburg journal in which the *Literary Salons* first appeared; it was published also in *Le Voltaire* of May 23, 1879.

The brief portrait of Henri Monnier, who is hardly known outside of France except as the creator of Joseph Prudhomme, was first published in *Thirty Years in Paris.* The same is true of the article on Desroches — *The End of a Buffoon*, etc. — a wonderfully lifelike description of the life which he saw at such close quarters during his early years in Paris, and which Henri Mürger, writing with an even more intimate acquaintance of his subject, pictured so vividly to an earlier generation in his *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème.*

The pretty little retreat under the willow-tree on the river by the *Île des Moineaux*, where Daudet first met Léon Pillaut, will be found described in *The Little Parish Church;* it was Lydie's "bath-room," one of the spots haunted by Richard after her flight with the prince; but the sketch as it appears in this volume had never before been printed.

It has always seemed to me that the "history" of *Fromont and Risler* is the most absorbingly interesting of all Daudet's narratives of the genesis of his various books; perhaps because it is the first of them that he wrote, and for that

reason contains more general information as to his method of work, and because the particular book to which it relates was his first venture in the direction of novel-writing; perhaps, too, because it contains that affectionate tribute to his wife which he epitomized in the dedication to the *Nabob*. He had been married in 1867, and his thirty years of married life were never clouded by a suggestion of infelicity of any of the varieties so powerfully described by him in *Artists' Wives*. — "Not a page which she has not revised and retouched, on which she has not cast a little of her lovely gold and azure dust," says Daudet, speaking of her share in his work.[1]

In the *Journal des Goncourt* there are one or two sympathetic references to Mme. Daudet. "1874, Friday, 5 June. Yesterday Alphonse Daudet came with his wife to lunch with me. A partnership which resembles that between my brother and myself. The wife writes, and I have reason to suspect that she is an artist in style."

"1885. Sunday, 25 January. — To-day Daudet and his wife came to see me. . . .

"Daudet talked of the first years after his marriage, told me that his wife did not know that there was such a place as the *mont-de-piété*, and that, when she found it out, a sort of modesty prevented her from mentioning it and she never taunted him with a: 'You have been there!' —

[1] See, too, *My Brother and I*, pp. 447–448.

The pleasantest part of the story is that this young woman, brought up in bourgeois fashion, never betrayed the slightest fright in her new existence, in the society of that circle of eaters of dinners, squanderers of five-franc pieces and borrowers of pantaloons.

"'Why, upon my word,' cried Daudet, 'the dear woman spent nothing, nothing at all, on herself. We still have our little account-books of those days, where, among louis taken by me or somebody else, there is an occasional entry, here and there, of *omnibus* 30 *centimes*, for her.' — Mme. Daudet ingenuously interrupted him, saying: 'I really think that I was not fully developed in those days; I did not understand.'"

The *portrait intime* of Turgénieff was, as the footnote tells us, written in 1880 for the *Century Magazine*. In his volume entitled *Partial Portraits*, Mr. Henry James draws a no less sympathetic portrait of the Russian novelist's private character, and emphasizes even more strongly the attractive traits described by Daudet. The concluding paragraph, beginning: "As I correct the proofs of this article, —" was first published in the *Temps* of November 10, 1883, the year of Turgénieff's death. It inadvertently conveys the impression that the *Souvenirs* to which it refers were written *by* his friend, whereas they were souvenirs *of* Turgénieff written by his secretary, one Pavlovsky, — a series of alleged private conversations between himself and his employer. As the pretended

strictures upon Daudet were, to say the least, of doubtful authenticity, — for their publication was, at the best, such a shameless breach of confidence that the person who perpetrated it might justifiably be suspected of exaggeration, if nothing worse — it would seem that Daudet would have been well advised to let the matter pass without notice. Perhaps he would have done so, except that the supposititious criticisms created a sensation and were made a handle upon which to hang attacks upon him. I have been assured by one who was the friend of both men that the incident was never considered to have any real importance or to throw any new light upon Turgénieff's character.[1]

Of the eight stories now collected under the general title of *La Fédor, Pages from Life*, and printed in this volume, the first (*La Fédor*) had been previously published (in 1896) as *The Burial of a Star*, and three others, *At Fort Montrouge, At La Salpêtrière*, and *The Lesson in History*, in one volume (also in 1896), under the title of *Three Memories.*

Les Sanguinaires is, like the *Lighthouse of the Sanguinaires*, and like some episodes in the *Nabob*, an echo of the trip to Corsica by order of his physician in 1863. There are minor points of re-

[1] In the description of Edmond de Goncourt's last hours, entitled *Ultima*, printed in the volume with *Memories of a Man of Letters*, there is a further reference to this subject, indicating that Goncourt also was maltreated in the same work.

semblance between the first-named two, notably the reference to the library of the lighthouse, consisting only of the volume of Plutarch.

Ariatan's Treasure was published in 1896. The Provençal verses, printed as an epigraph, were originally written by Daudet on a copy of *Letters from my Mill*, Volume I. of the Lemerre collected edition, without the heading *In Crau* and with some variations. The same verses, without translation and with another slight variation, were inserted in the *Book of Gold of Political and Literary Annals* (1893).

GEORGE B. IVES.

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS.

PAGES FROM MY LIFE AND MY BOOKS.

I.

THE ARRIVAL.

SUCH a journey! Merely thinking of it thirty years after, I can still feel my legs encased in iron fetters, and I am seized with cramps in the stomach. Two days in a third-class railway carriage, dressed in thin summer clothing, and in bitterly cold weather. I was sixteen years old; I came from a long distance, from the very heart of Languedoc, where I was usher in a school, to devote myself to literature. When my ticket was paid for, I had just forty sous left in my pocket; but why should I be alarmed? I was so rich in hopes that I forgot to be hungry; despite the seductions of the bakeshop and the sandwiches displayed on the lunch counters at railway stations, I would not part with my silver coin, carefully stowed away in one of my pockets. Toward the end of the journey, however, when our train, groaning and tossing us from side to side, was whirling us across the melancholy plains

of Champagne, I was very near being ill. My travelling companions, sailors who passed their time in singing, offered me a flask. Worthy fellows! How jolly their rough songs were — and how good their fiery eau-de-vie, to a boy who had not eaten for twice twenty-four hours!

That saved and revivified me; my fatigue inclined me to sleep. I dozed — but with periodical awakenings when the train stopped, and relapses into drowsiness when it went on again.

The noise of wheels rattling over cast-iron plates, an enormous arched roof of glass, flooded with light, doors slamming, baggage-trucks rumbling, a restless, busy crowd, custom-house officials — Paris!

My brother was waiting for me on the platform. Being a practical youth, in spite of his tender years, he was fully alive to his duties as an older brother, and had engaged a hand-cart and a porter.

"We will go and load your luggage."

It was an imposing sight, that luggage! A wretched little valise, studded with nails, with many patches, and heavier than its contents. We started for the Latin Quarter along the deserted quays, through the sleeping streets, marching behind our little cart pushed by the porter. It was barely daylight; we met nobody but workmen with faces blue with cold, and newspaper carriers who deftly slipped the morning papers under the house doors. The gas-jets were extinguished; the streets, the Seine and its bridges, all appeared

to me in a sort of twilight through the morning mist. Such was my entrance into Paris; clinging to my brother, with anguish at my heart, I shuddered involuntarily from sheer terror; and still we followed the little cart.

"If you 're not over-anxious to see our rooms, let us go and have some breakfast first," said Ernest.

"Oh! yes, let us eat."

I was literally starving to death.

Alas! the creamery, a creamery on Rue Corneille, was not open; we had to wait a long while, walking about the neighborhood to keep ourselves warm, and making the circuit of the Odéon, which made a deep impression on me with its vast roof, its portico and its temple-like aspect.

At last the shutters were thrown back; a waiter, half-asleep, admitted us, dragging his feet heavily along in their loose slippers, and grumbling like stable-boys awakened at posting stations to harness the fresh horses. That breakfast at daybreak will never fade from my memory; I have only to close my eyes to see again the little room with its bare white walls, with its rows of pegs driven into the rough plaster, the counter piled with napkins arranged in circles, the marble tables, without cloths, but shining with cleanliness; glasses, salt-cellars, and tiny little decanters filled with a wine in which there was not the slightest trace of grape-juice, but which I considered excellent, such as it was, were already in place.

"*Three of coffee,*" the waiter ordered of his own motion when he saw us. As there was nobody but himself in the restaurant or kitchen at that early hour, he answered himself: "*Boum!*' and brought us "three of coffee," — that is to say three sous' worth of a delicious balsamic coffee, sweetened to a reasonable degree, which disappeared in short order, simultaneously with two little rolls served in a wicker basket.

Then we ordered an omelet; for it was still too early for a cutlet.

"An omelet for two, *boum!*" roared the waiter.

"Well cooked!" cried my brother.

I bowed with respectful admiration before the self-possession and grand manners of that sybarite of a brother of mine; and at dessert, what plans, what confidences we exchanged, as we sat eye to eye, our elbows on the table before a plate of nuts and raisins! A man becomes a better man when he has eaten. Adieu melancholy, adieu anxiety! that simple breakfast intoxicated me as thoroughly as champagne.

We went out arm-in-arm, talking very loud. It was broad daylight at last. Paris smiled upon me from all its open shops; even the Odéon assumed an affable air to greet me, and the white marble queens in the Luxembourg garden, whom I saw indistinctly through the railings, standing among the leafless trees, seemed to nod their heads gracefully to me and to bid me welcome.

My brother was rich. He performed the duties of secretary to an old gentleman who was dictat-

ing his memoirs to him, at a salary of seventy-five francs per month. We must needs live on that seventy-five francs pending the time when glory should fall to my lot, must share that little room on the fifth floor of the Hôtel du Sénat, Rue de Tournon; almost a garret, but in my eyes a superb apartment. A Parisian garret! The mere sight of the words *Hôtel du Sénat* standing forth in great letters on the sign flattered my self-esteem and dazzled me. Opposite the hotel, on the other side of the way, there is a house dating from the last century, with a pediment and two couchant figures, which always look as if they proposed to fall from the top of the wall into the street.

"That 's where Ricord lives," said my brother, "the famous Ricord, the Emperor's physician."

The Hôtel du Sénat, the Emperor's physician — those high-sounding phrases tickled my vanity, fascinated me. Oh! the first impressions of Paris!

The great restaurants on Boulevard Saint-Michel, the new buildings on Boulevard Saint-Germain and Rue des Écoles had not yet driven the studious youth from the Quarter, and, despite its pompous name, our hotel on Rue de Tournon could hardly boast at that time of an atmosphere of senatorial gravity.

There was a whole colony of students there, a horde from the south of Gascony, excellent fellows, a little vainglorious, self-assured and jovial, great connoisseurs in beer-mugs and tedious lec-

tures, who filled the stairways and corridors with their deep bass voices. They passed their time talking on all conceivable subjects and arguing without respite. We met them rarely, except on Sunday, and even then only by accident, that is to say when our purse permitted us to indulge in the luxury of a *table d'hôte* dinner.

It was there that I first saw Gambetta. He was already the man we have since known and admired. Happy in being alive, happy in being able to talk, that loquacious Roman, grafted on a Gallic stock, made himself giddy with the clatter of his harangues, made the window-panes tremble with the outbursts of his thunderous eloquence, and generally ended with a loud roar of laughter. He held sway even then over the multitude of his comrades. He was a personage of importance in the Quarter, especially as he received three hundred francs monthly from Cahors — an enormous sum for a student in those far-away times. We became intimate afterward. But I was as yet only a provincial, arrived overnight, with the rough surface hardly worn off. I confined myself to staring at him from the end of the table, with profound admiration and without a shade of envy.

He and his friends were intensely interested in politics; in the Latin Quarter they were already laying siege to the Tuileries, whereas my tastes, my ambitions turned toward conquests of another sort. Literature was the single goal of all my dreams. Sustained by the unlimited confidence of youth, poor but radiant with hope, I

passed that whole year in my garret, writing verses. That is a common and affecting story. Paris counts by the hundreds the poor young devils whose only fortune is a few rhymes ; but I do not believe that any one ever began his career in destitution more complete than mine.

With the exception of my brother, I knew no one. Short-sighted, awkward and shy, when I stole out of my garret I invariably made the circuit of the Odéon, I walked under its galleries, drunk with awe and with joy at the thought that I should meet men of letters there. At Mme. Gaut's shop, for instance. Mme. Gaut, who was quite old but had surprisingly sharp, bright eyes, allowed the public to look through the new books displayed on her shelves, on condition that they did not cut the leaves.

I can see her now, talking with the great novelist Barbey d'Aurevilly; she, knitting a stocking, the author of *Une Vieille Maîtresse* with his hand on his hip "à la Mérovingienne," and the collar of his wagoner's cloak, lined with fine black velvet, thrown back, so that every one may appreciate the splendor of that outwardly modest garment.

Some one approaches — it is Vallès. The future member of the Commune passed Mme. Gaut's shop almost every day, on his return from "Mère Morel's" office, where he was in the habit of going daily to work and read. Bilious, sneering, eloquent, always dressed in the same wretched frock-coat, he talked in a harsh, metallic voice,

with his lowering Auvergnat face enveloped in a beard as stiff as a brush, which reached almost to his eyebrows. That voice made me nervous. He had just written *L'Argent*, a sort of pamphlet dedicated to Mirès and embellished with a five-franc piece by way of vignette; and, pending the time when he should become Mirès's partner, he had become the inseparable comrade of Gustave Planche, the old critic. The Aristarchus of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was at that time a corpulent old man with a forbidding manner, an inflated Philoctetes, who dragged one leg and limped. One day I had the audacity to spy upon them through a window in the café on Rue Taranne, hoisting myself up to the glass, and rubbing it clean with my fingers; it was the café next to the house, now pulled down, in which Diderot lived for forty years. They were sitting on opposite sides of the table; Vallès was gesticulating earnestly, Planche absorbing a decanter of eau-de-vie, glass by glass.[1]

And Cressot! the meek, the eccentric Cressot, whom Vallès afterward immortalized in his *Réfractaires;* it would be hard for me to forget him. I have often seen him in the Quarter, gliding along the walls, with his sad, distressed face, and his long skeleton-like body wrapped in a short cloak.

Cressot was the author of *Antonia*, a poem.

[1] Planche died in 1857, the same year that Daudet arrived in Paris. Jules Vallès was at one time his secretary, and after his death published a monograph, "full of affectionate memories."

What had that poor Gringoire to live upon? No one knew. One fine day a friend in the provinces left him a little property; that day Cressot ate a square meal, and died of it.

Another face of that period is engraved in my memory, that of Jules de la Madelène, one of the best *poetæ minores* of our prose literature, the too little known author of creations which excel in lines genuinely antique: the *Âmes en Peine* and the *Marquis de Saffras.* Aristocratic manners, a fair head recalling Tintoret's "Christ," refined, somewhat sickly, features, eyes overflowing with melancholy and weeping for the sunshine of Provence, his home. His story was whispered from ear to ear, — that of an enthusiast and hero of good stock. In June, 1848, he was wounded on the barricades and left for dead in the ranks of the insurgents. Picked up in the street by a bourgeois, he remained in hiding in his rescuer's house, where the family nursed him and restored him to health. When he was fully cured, he married the daughter of the house.

Nothing more is needed to kindle the ambition than to meet famous men, to have the good luck to exchange a few words with them. "I, too, will make my mark!" you say to yourself with full confidence.

With what ardor I would climb my five flights — especially when I had succeeded in effecting the purchase of a candle, which would enable me to work all night, to elaborate, by its dim light, poems, outlines of dramas, succeeding one another

in an endless line on sheets of white paper. Presumption gave me wings; I seemed to see the future throw its doors wide open before me, I forgot my poverty, I forgot my privations; as, for instance, on that Christmas Eve when I dashed off rhymes in a frenzy, while the students below were holding high festival with a vast deal of noise, and Gambetta's voice, rumbling under the arches of the stairway, echoed by the walls of the corridor, made my frost-covered window rattle.

But in the street my former terrors regained the mastery. The Odéon, in particular, impressed me with dread; it seemed to me all through the year as cold, as imposing and inaccessible as on the day of my arrival. Oh, Odéon, — Mecca of my aspirations, goal of my inmost ambition, — how many times did I renew my hesitating, secret attempts to cross the august threshold of the little low door through which thy artists enter! How many times have I watched Tisserant pass through that door in all his glory, his shoulders stooping beneath his cloak, with a meek, slouching air, copied from Frédérick Lemaître! Behind him, arm-in-arm with Flaubert, and as like him as a brother, Louis Bouilhet, author of *Madame de Montarcy*, and frequently Comte d'Osmoy, to-day a deputy. Those three were then writing a fanciful play, which never saw the boards. Behind them, and following them, came a group of four or five giants, of military carriage, all Normans, all cut on the same cuirassier pattern, with light moustaches. That was the cohort of

Rouennese, Bouilhet's lieutenants, who applauded to order at first performances.

Then Amédée Rolland, Jean Duboys, Bataille,[1] a younger trio, enterprising, bold, trying to creep in through the little door in their turn, the tail of Tisserant's enormous cloak, as it were.

All three died like Bouilhet at the very outset of their literary careers, and that is why the galleries of the Odéon, when I walk there at twilight, seem to me to be peopled with friendly shades.

Meanwhile, having completed a volume of poems, I went the rounds of the publishers; I knocked at Michel Lévy's door, at Hachette's; where did I not go? I insinuated myself into all the great publishing houses, immense as cathedrals, where my boots squeaked frightfully and made a horrible noise notwithstanding the carpets. Clerks of bureaucratic mien scrutinized me with a cold and self-sufficient air.

"I would like to see M. Lévy — about some manuscript."

"Very well, monsieur; be good enough to give me your name."

My name duly given, the clerk would, in a leisurely way, put his lips to one of the orifices of the speaking-tube; then, putting his ear to the other, —

[1] In the sketch entitled *At the Salpêtrière*, page 345 of this volume, Daudet speaks of Duboys and Bataille as two of his best friends, who died insane. For Duboys see also page 45. He died in 1873.

"M. Lévy is not in."

M. Lévy was never in, nor M. Hachette; no one was ever in, always by favor of that insolent speaking-tube.

There was also the Librairie Nouvelle, on Boulevard des Italiens. There, there were no speaking-tubes, no red tape, quite the contrary. Jacotet, the publisher, who was then issuing his small one-franc volumes, — an idea of his own, — was a short stout man bearing some resemblance to Balzac, but without Balzac's forehead, always on the move, overwhelmed with business and with dinner-parties, constantly revolving some colossal project in his brain, and with gold burning holes in his pockets. That eddying whirl led him to bankruptcy in two years, and he crossed the Alps and founded the newspaper *L'Italie.* But his shop served the purpose of a salon for the intellectual aristocracy of the boulevards; there one might see Noriac, who had just published his *Cent-et-Unième Régiment*; Scholl, proud of his great success, *Dénise*; Adolphe Gaiffe, and Aubryet. All these habitués of the boulevard, irreproachably dressed, discoursing of money and women, gave me a feeling of bewilderment when I saw my own person reflected with theirs in the panes of the show-window, with my hair as long as a bagpiper's and my little Provence hat. As for Jacotet, he constantly made appointments to meet me at three in the afternoon at Maison d'Or.

"We will have a talk there," he would say, "and sign our contract on the corner of a table."

What a joker! I hardly knew where to find his "Maison d'Or!" Only my brother had a word of encouragement for me when I returned home in despair.

One evening, however, I brought home with me glorious news and exceeding joy! The *Spectateur*, a legitimist journal, had agreed to put my talents to the proof as a news-writer. One can readily imagine the ardor and care with which I wrote my first article; even to the point of laboring over the penmanship! I carried it to the office, it was read and found satisfactory, and sent to the composing-room. I waited, hardly breathing, for the number to appear. Presto! Paris is turned topsy-turvy, some Italians have fired on the Emperor.

We were wild with terror, the newspapers were prosecúted, the *Spectateur* suppressed! Orsini's bomb blew up my article.

I did not kill myself, but I thought of it.

And yet heaven took pity on my misery. The publisher whom I had sought in vain suddenly appeared under my nose, — Tardieu, on Rue de Tournon, at my very door. He was a literary man himself, and some of his works had been successful: *Mignon* and *Pour Une Épingle*, compositions of the sentimental order, written in rose-colored ink. I made his acquaintance by chance one fine evening, when I was strolling near our hotel and he was sitting in front of his shop. He published my *Amoureuses*. The title proved attractive and so did the dainty exterior of the

volume. Some newspapers spoke of my work and of me. My timidity took flight. I walked boldly under the galleries of the Odéon to see how my book was selling — and I even ventured after a few days to accost Jules Vallès! I had appeared.[1]

[1] *Les Amoureuses* were published in 1857–58.

II.

VILLEMESSANT.[1]

SOMETIMES — when my personal necessities and the hazards of my wanderings coincide — I go to be shaved or have my hair cut at Lespès's. A curious and distinctively Parisian spot is that great barber's shop, occupying the whole corner of the Frascati building, on Rue Vivienne and Boulevard Montmartre! Its clientage is *All-Paris;* that is to say, that infinitely small fragment of Paris which leads its life between the Gymnase and the Opéra, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette and the Bourse, and fancies that it alone exists; hangers-on of the greenroom, actors, journalists, to say nothing of the restless, busy legion of worthy *boulevardiers,* who do nothing at all. Twenty or thirty permanent attendants shave and curl them all.

Superintending everything, with one eye on the razors and the other on the jars of pomade, the master, Lespès, prowls about here and there, an active little man whom the fortune he has made — for he is very rich — might have fattened, were it not that a certain disappointed ambition keeps him in a suitably feverish frame of mind.

[1] Written in 1879.

It was in that house, predestined in very sooth, that *Le Figaro* had its offices twenty years ago, on the same entresol where Lespès shaves his clients. There were the passage way, the subscription department, the counting-room, and, behind an iron-wire grating, the round eye and hooked nose of Père Legendre, always vexed, rarely good-natured, like a parrot playing the rôle of cashier. There was the editorial office (*The Public not admitted!* on the soiled glass panes of the door), a few chairs and a large table covered with an enormous green cloth. I can see it all distinctly at this moment, and I can see my bashful self, seated in a corner, holding tight under my arm my first article, rolled and tied with fatherly care. Villemessant had not arrived and they had told me to wait: I was waiting.

There were half-a-dozen of them around the green table that day, clipping from newspapers and writing. They laughed and talked and consumed cigarettes; the infernal caldron bubbled gayly. Among them was a short man with a red face beneath a mass of perfectly white hair, standing on end, which suggested Riquet à la Houppe. It was M. Paul d'Ivoy, the famous news-writer, kidnapped from the *Courrier de Paris* by a lavish use of gold; Paul d'Ivoy, in short, whose fabulous salary — it was fabulous for the time, but would seem smaller now — was the envy and admiration of the literary breweries. He wrote with a smile on his face, like a man content with himself; the sheets of paper rapidly grew black

under his pen; and I watched M. Paul d'Ivoy write and smile.

Suddenly there is a sound of heavy footsteps, a cheerful, hoarse voice: Villemessant! The pens scratch busily, the laughter ceases, the cigarettes are hidden; Paul d'Ivoy alone raises his head and dares to gaze familiarly upon the god.

VILLEMESSANT. — Very good, my children; I see that we are getting on. (*To Paul d'Ivoy, affably.*) Are you satisfied with your article?

PAUL D'IVOY. — I think it rather good.

VILLEMESSANT. — So much the better; it happens very nicely, as it will be your last.

PAUL D'IVOY (*pale as a ghost*). — My last?

VILLEMESSANT. — Just so! I am not joking — your copy is something terrible; there 's only one opinion on the boulevard; you 've been hanging around our necks long enough.

Paul d'Ivoy had risen: "But, Monsieur, our agreement?"

"Our agreement? Very good! Try going to law about it, that will be amusing; I will have your articles read aloud in court, and we will see if any agreement can compel me to stuff such idiotic trash into my newspaper!"

Villemessant was the man to do as he threatened, and Paul d'Ivoy did not go to law. But none the less that way of shaking his editorial staff out of the window, like an old rug, sent a shiver down my back, unsophisticated creature that I was. I would have liked to be a hundred

feet underground with my unfortunate manuscript, rolled in such an absurd way. That was an impression I have never forgotten. I met Villemessant frequently afterward and he was always very agreeable to me, but I always felt when I saw him the unpleasant thrill of terror which little Hop-o'-my-Thumb must feel when he meets the ogre.

Let me add, in order to do him justice, that, later on, at the death of that same Paul d'Ivoy whom he had so brutally dismissed, it was Villemessant — an ogre with the lining of a Saint-Vincent de Paul — who insisted upon assuming the expense of his children's education.

"Is he kind? — is he cruel?" It is difficult to answer the question, and Diderot's comedy seems to have been written with him in mind. Kind? He certainly was! Cruel, too, according to the day and hour; and a painter might make two portraits of him, without falsifying a line or a tone — one fatherly, the other pitiless; one all black, the other all rose-color — which would in no wise resemble each other, but would both resemble the subject.

If one wished to relate characteristic anecdotes of that strange dual personality, he would find only too many to select from.

Before the war I made the acquaintance of a worthy man, the father of a family, who was a clerk at the central Post Office on Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He remained in Paris during the Commune. Had he some trace of sympathy

with the insurrection in the depths of his heart? I would not swear that he had not. Did he say to himself that, as letters continued to arrive at Paris, it was necessary, after all, for some one to assort and distribute them? That also is possible. Perhaps, too, with a wife and grown-up daughters it was not an easy matter for him to move at a moment's notice. At that time Paris contained no small number of poor devils in such a plight, barricaders by force of circumstances, insurgents without knowing why. However that may be, despite M. Thiers's orders, my friend remained at his office, behind his railing, assorting his letters amid the roar of battle as if nothing were happening; he refused to accept promotion or increase of pay from the Commune. When the Commune was overthrown, however, he found himself none the less — fortunate to escape a court-martial — thrown on the street, penniless, discharged from his post as he was on the eve of retirement with a pension. Thereupon a pitiful yet comical existence began for him. He had not dared to inform his family of his dismissal from the government service; every morning his daughters laid out the freshly starched shirt — a government clerk must be neat! — and carefully, merrily, as before, tied his cravat and kissed him on the doorsteps at the regular hour, imagining that he was going to his office. His office? Ah! it was a long distance away, was the office, cool in summer, well warmed in winter, where the hours passed so placidly. Now he must tramp

around Paris, in the rain, through the snow, seeking employment which he never found, and go home at night, with death in his heart, to lie and invent stories about a deputy chief who did not exist, about an imaginary office-boy, forcing himself to assume a cheerful air. (I made use of the poor man as the model of Père Joyeuse in *The Nabob;* he too was in quest of employment and told fibs to his daughters.) I met him sometimes, and it was heartrending. His distress led me to go to Villemessant. Villemessant, I thought, will surely find him some little corner in the managerial department of *Figaro.* Impossible: every place was filled. And a Communard, too, fancy! A fine outcry there would be if it were discovered that Villemessant employed a Communard in his offices. But the story of the daughters, the clean shirts, the cravat bows, had touched the excellent ogre, so it seemed.

"I have an idea!" he said; "how much did your protégé earn a month?"

"Two hundred francs."

"Very well! I will give you two hundred francs a month for him until he has found a place. He can still pretend to be going to his office, his daughters can still tie his cravats for him." And he concluded his speech with the everlasting: "It will be very pleasant!"

It was very pleasant, in truth: for three months the good man received his little income. After three months, having found a place at last, he practised such strict economy and kept himself

on such short commons, that one fine morning he came to me with the six hundred francs and a beautiful letter of thanks for M. de Villemessant, whose name I had divulged to him, and whom, despite their disagreement in politics, he nobly called his benefactor. I carried the money to Villemessant.

"It 's very pleasant! But I gave him that money! and now he wants to return it to me. It 's the first time that ever happened to me. And a Communard, too! It 's very pleasant."

How Villemessant shouted and laughed, and how enthusiastic he was! He threw himself back in his chair. But now follows a touch which will complete the man's portrait. Overjoyed, delighted, both by the kind deed he had done and by the very natural pleasure that we feel — however sceptical we may be — in the discovery that we have not been deceived and have not wasted our kindness on an ingrate, Villemessant, as he talked, amused himself by playing with the six hundred francs and arranging them in six little piles on the table. Suddenly he turned to me:

"Why! I say, Daudet, the money 's a hundred sous short!"

It was, in fact, a hundred sous short, a wretched gold piece overlooked in a fold of the coat-lining. At the height of his enthusiasm the practical man of business appeared.

Such is that man's complicated nature; a shrewd calculator, very malicious in reality beneath an appearance of good-fellowship and

impulsiveness that would make one believe that Toulouse is a near neighbor of Blois and that the turrets of Chambord are located on one of the arms of the Garonne![1]

In private and even in public life, Villemessant has made familiarity a principle — in his treatment of others, be it understood! for he exacts a full measure of respect when he himself is concerned. On the day following one of those intensely bitter *echoes*, which he was in the habit of inserting in his newspaper, at the last moment, while the presses were at work, Villemessant was summoned to the office of the president of the Corps Législatif. (This took place under the Empire.) He was requested to explain — I do not think I can be mistaken — the famous "Morny is in the affair," which old *boulevardiers* must remember. The duke was very angry, or pretended to be, but the man from Blois was not disconcerted.

"What! Monsieur le Duc, you did not send for me to present me with a decoration? That *garde de Paris*, with his sealed missive and his helmet, can boast of having caused me a thrill of emotion — my editors are already preparing to

[1] Villemessant resuscitated *Figaro* in 1854. In 1868 he founded *Le Diable à Quatre*, and while not relinquishing his control of *Figaro* allowed M. Jules Richard to adopt in its columns a tone somewhat more agreeable to the government. In 1873 he offered *Figaro* for sale and announced his determination to retire from journalism, but did nothing of the kind. In 1874 the Governor of Paris suspended *Figaro* for a fortnight.

Villemessant died in 1879, having apparently retained his controlling interest in the journal to the end.

illuminate. Upon my word, this is very pleasant!" — And in an instant, an amusing story, an anecdote, an exceedingly shrewd, intensely Parisian remark, enveloped in a loud laugh; and, with all the rest, an air of profound concern, a keen and very manifest pleasure in saying: "Monsieur le Duc!" — and the grievance was forgotten.

Elsewhere, at Persigny's[1] for example, familiarity was less successful; and on a certain day Villemessant found that his most bewildering buffoonery congealed in the cold official atmosphere and fell stiff and lifeless. But Morny, for his part, forgave everything; that man doted on Villemessant, and, thanks to his all-powerful protection, *Figaro* was able to indulge in innumerable tricks. What respect, therefore, what veneration he had for the president! I looked forward to the time when they would build a little chapel to him in the walls of the editorial sanctum, as to the protecting genius of the place, as to a household god. All of which did not prevent the *Figaro's* publishing, one morning, in a prominent place, apropos of the Duc de Saint-Rémy's plays — that was the name assumed by the duke as a man of letters — an article by Henri Rochefort, as corrosive as a test-tube filled with acid, as sharp

[1] Jean G. V. F., Comte, afterwards Duc de Persigny, 1808-1872, Bonapartist conspirator and politician. He was concerned in the Bonapartist plots of Strasbourg in 1836 and Boulogne in 1840, and was one of the leading conspirators in the *coup d'état* of 1851. He held various important posts under the Second Empire: Minister of the Interior 1852–54 and 1860–63, and Ambassador in London 1855–58 and 1859–60.

and unpleasant as a handful of needles left in an easy-chair.[1]

"Why has this M. Rochefort a grudge against me? I never injured him in any way!" said the duke, with the artless vanity which not even the most sophisticated statesmen escape when they have dipped their finger in ink; and Villemessant, assuming a distressed expression, exclaimed:—

"It 's horrible! Such an article would never have passed me — you see how distressed I am. But on that particular day I did n't go to the office, and the rascals took advantage of it; I did n't read the proofs."

The duke thought whatever he chose of the excuse; but the article made a sensation. People showed it to one another, snatched it from one another's hands. That was all Villemessant wanted.

From this incident we see (and herein lies the unity of that apparently many-sided and contradictory character) that Villemessant was, before and above all else, the editor of his newspaper.

[1] As to the relations between Morny and Rochefort, see the article upon the latter in this volume, page 138. The Duc de Morny was born in 1811 and died in 1865. He was an officer in the army from 1830–32. He entered public life in 1842, was chosen to the Corps Législatif from Puy-de-Dôme in 1849, and was one of the most prominent actors in the *coup d'état* of 1851. He was Minister of the Interior 1850–52, and President of the Corps Législatif from 1854 until his death, serving also as Ambassador to Russia in 1856–7.

As the Duc de Mora he plays a prominent part in Daudet's novel of *The Nabob*. He also appears under the same name in the sketch: *Memoirs of a Chief Clerk*, in this volume.

After the gropings in the dark at the outset, volleys fired here and there, somewhat at random, feelers put forth to all the points of the compass, — when the course was once laid, he took his bearings and sailed straight. His newspaper became his life.

The man and his work resemble each other; and one may fairly say that no man was ever shaped more exactly to the measure of his destiny. Marvellously active, restless, lively, displacing a vast quantity of air, and, withal, sober in his habits, as men used to be sober, which astonishes those of the present day; a non-drinker, a non-smoker, fearing neither loud talk nor blows nor adventures; unscrupulous in reality, always ready to throw his prejudices overboard; never having had any very profound political beliefs, but fond of making a show of platonic legitimism and of a certain respect which he considered becoming to him, Villemessant was the very man who was needed to command that audacious corsair, which roamed the seas for twenty years, under the royal flag studded with fleurs-de-lis, doing business to some extent on its own account.

He was tyrannical and capricious; but probe the affair to the bottom and the interest of the newspaper will always afford an explanation of his tyranny and his caprice. We are at the *Café des Variétés* or the *Café Véron* at eleven o'clock on a Thursday, in the year of grace 1858. *Figaro* has just appeared, Villemessant is breakfasting. He talks, tries experiments with anecdotes which he

will put in the next number if they raise a laugh, which he will forget if they fall flat. He listens and asks questions. — "What do you think of So-and-So's article?" "Charming!" "And such talent, eh?" "Extraordinary talent!" With radiant face Villemessant points to the paper: "Where is So-and-So? Send for So-and-So! Extraordinary talent! He's the only man! All Paris is talking about his article!" — And behold, So-and-So is congratulated, petted, and has his salary raised. Four days later, at the same table, the same guest declares the same So-and-So's article tedious, and Villemessant draws himself up once more, not radiant now, but in a rage, not to increase his salary but to settle his account. Doubtless the scene between Villemessant and Paul d'Ivoy, which so scandalized my pristine innocence, was the result of one of these consultations between the fruit and the cheese.

Of what consequence was an editor to Villemessant? When one had gone another turned up; and the last comer was always the best. According to him, *every man has his article inside of him;* the only thing is to get it out. Monselet embroidered a fascinating legend upon that theory: Villemessant meets a chimney-sweep in the street; he takes him to the offices of *Figaro*, washes his face, seats him in front of a sheet of paper, and says to him: "Write!" The sweep writes, and his article proves to be delightful. So it is that All-Paris, illustrious or obscure,

which can hold a pen, has passed through the columns of *Figaro*. So it is that some worthy fellows — seeing the story of Saint-Aulaire's quatrain repeated in their favor — have had their quarter of an hour of celebrity, by virtue of a lucky find of fifteen lines. Afterward, the miracle not being repeated, it was discovered that they were empty, had been emptied by Villemessant. I have known a Paris filled with people thus emptied. What an epoch of innocence, when one was emptied by the discharge of fifteen lines!

Not that Villemessant despises literature: far from it! Although himself unlettered, he has the respect of a peasant for his curé's Latin for those who write well, who *hold their tongue*, as he expresses it. But he realizes instinctively, and not without reason, that they are the people of bulky tomes and of the Academy. To cakes of that weight and that shape he prefers for his shop the dainty Parisian puff-cake. He said one day to Jouvin, in my presence, with the cynical frankness for which his outspoken manner wins forgiveness:

"You work over your articles; they are the work of a literary artist, as everybody agrees, remarkable, learned, admirably written, and I publish them. But nobody reads them in my paper."

"Nobody reads them? Upon my word!"

"Do you want to make a wager? Daudet here will be a witness. I will print Cambronne's

remark[1] in the middle of one of your most finished pieces, and I have lost my wager if any one discovers it!"

My impartiality as a witness compels me to say that Jouvin refused to bet.

[1] See the article on Cambronne in Larousse. See also Victor Hugo's LES MISÉRABLES: *Cosette*, Book I. Chap. XV.

III.

MY FIRST COAT.

How did I come by that coat? What tailor of primitive times, what unlooked-for M. Dimanche[1] decided, on the faith of fantastic promises, to bring it to me one morning, all glaringly new, and artistically pinned in a cambric handkerchief? It would be very difficult for me to tell. Of the honest tailor I remember nothing at all — so many tailors have crossed my path since then! — nothing, unless it be, in a luminous mist, a pensive brow and a heavy moustache. But the coat is here, before my eyes. Its image is still engraved in my memory, after twenty years, as on imperishable brass. Such a collar, young men, and such lapels! And, above all, such skirts, cut like the mouthpiece of a flute! My brother, a man of experience, had said: "A man must have a coat if he wants to make his way in the world!" And the dear fellow relied much on that garment for my renown and my future.

Augustine Brohan had the honor of christening that first coat of mine. These are the circumstances, worthy to be handed down to posterity:

[1] A creation of Molière; introduced in the most comical scene of *Don Juan*. The name became proverbial as the type of the timid creditor who lends money but dares not demand repayment.

My volume had blossomed, virginal and fresh in its rose-pink covers. Some newspapers had mentioned my rhymes. Even the *Officiel* had printed my name. I was a poet, no longer in manuscript, but published, launched, displayed in shop-windows. I was astounded that the crowd did not turn to look when my eighteen years sailed through the streets. I really felt on my brow the gentle pressure of a paper crown made of reviews clipped from the journals.

One day some one proposed to procure me an invitation to Augustine's evenings. Who was that SOME ONE? Why, SOME ONE, *parbleu!* — You can see him from here, the sempiternal SOME ONE who resembles everybody else, the obliging, providential person, who, although he amounts to nothing in himself, goes everywhere, takes you everywhere, the friend of a day, the friend of an hour, whose name nobody knows, an essentially Parisian type.

You can imagine whether I accepted! To be invited to Augustine's, — Augustine, the famous actress, Augustine with the laughing white teeth of Molière and with a suggestion of the more modern poetic smile of de Musset; — for, although she played soubrette parts at the Théâtre Français, de Musset had written his comedy of *Louison* at her house; — Augustine Brohan,[1] in fact, whose

[1] Augustine Brohan was a brilliant and versatile actress, who succeeded Rachel at the Conservatoire. She was a member of the company of the Comédie Française from 1847. She lived until 1893.

wit Paris eulogized, and quoted her *bons-mots*, and who already wore in her hat, not as yet dipped in ink, but cut with a sharp knife and all ready for use, the quill of the hue of the bluebird with which she was to sign the *Lettres de Suzanne*.

"Lucky dog!" said my brother, as he helped me to put on my coat, "now your fortune is made."

Nine o'clock was striking; I started.

Augustine Brohan lived at that time on Rue Lord-Byron, at the upper end of the Champs-Élysées, in one of those dainty houses which poor little provincials, of poetic imagination, see in the dreams inspired by novelists. An iron fence, a small garden, a flight of four steps under an awning, a reception-room full of flowers, and in another instant the salon, a green salon brilliantly lighted, which I can see now so distinctly.

How I ascended the steps, how I entered, how I presented myself, I have no idea. A servant announced my name, but that name, mumbled as it was, produced no effect on the assemblage. I remember nothing but a woman's voice, which said:

"Good, a dancing man!" It seemed that dancing men were lacking. What an entry for a lyric poet!

Terrified, humiliated, I slunk out of sight in the crowd. How describe my dismay! In a moment another adventure: my long hair, my sulky, lowering eye aroused public curiosity. I heard whispering about me: "Who is it? — just

look at him!" and everybody laughed. At last some one said:

"It 's the Wallachian prince!"

"The Wallachian prince? — ah! yes, of course."

It was evident that a Wallachian prince was expected that evening. I was identified, and they left me in peace. But you can hardly conceive, all the same, how my usurped crown weighed upon me all the evening. First a dancing man, then a Wallachian prince! In heaven's name, did not those people see my lyre?

Luckily for me, a piece of news which was suddenly repeated from mouth to mouth from one end of the salon to the other, caused the little dancing man and the Wallachian prince to be forgotten at the same instant. Marriage was then very much in vogue among the female contingent of the drama, and it was at Augustine Brohan's Wednesdays, where the fine flower of official journalism, of finance and of the higher circles of the Imperial government assembled about the pretty *sociétaires* or *pensionnaires* of the Théâtre Français, that most of these romantic matches were planned. Mlle. Fix, the clever actress with the long Jewish eyes, was soon to marry a great banker and to die in childbirth; Mlle. Figeac, a Catholic and romanticist, was already dreaming of having her future warerooms on Boulevard Haussmann solemnly blessed by a priest, as a ship is blessed when launched; Émilie Dubois, even the fair-haired Émilie, although

destined by her fragile beauty to play *ingénue* rôles forever, had visions of orange-flowers beneath the protecting shawl of Madame, her mother. As for Madeleine Brohan, Augustine's beautiful and majestic sister, she was not marrying, not she! but was in the act of unmarrying herself and of giving Mario Uchard the necessary leisure and materials for writing the four acts of *La Fiammina.* What an explosion there was, therefore, in that atmosphere charged with marital electricity, when this report was circulated: "Gustave Fould has married Valérie," — Gustave Fould, the son of the Minister; Valérie, the charming actress! That is all far away now. After flights to England, letters to the newspapers, pamphlets, a war *à la Mirabeau* against a father as inexorable as the *Friend of Mankind,*[1] after the most romantic of romances, capped by a most commonplace *dénouement,* Gustave Fould, following Mario Uchard's example, wrote the *Comtesse Romani,* and described his misfortunes in eloquent language on the stage. Mlle. Valérie has forgotten her name of Mme. Fould and signs with the pseudonym of "Gustave Haller" volumes entitled *Vertu,* with a beautiful picture on the delicate blue cover, — great passions calming themselves in a bath of literature. But that evening, gossip and excitement were rife in Augustine's green salon. The men, the government officials shook their heads

[1] The father of the great Mirabeau so styled himself. His character is drawn with characteristic energy by Carlyle in his *French Revolution.*

and rounded their mouths into the shape of an O to say: "It 's a serious matter! very serious!" — One could hear such remarks as: "Everything is going by the board." "Respect is a thing of the past." "The Emperor ought to intervene — sacred rights — paternal authority." The women, for their part, openly and merrily took sides with the lovers, who had fled to London. "Whose affair is it if they suit each other?" "Why should n't the father consent?" "He 's a minister, but what then?" "Since the Revolution, thank God! there 's no Bastille, or For-l'Évêque!" — Imagine everybody talking at once, and above and around the hurly-burly, like embroidery, the sparkling laughter of Augustine, a short, plump creature, and the merrier on that account, with eyes on a level with her face, pretty, short-sighted eyes, bright as diamonds, and always wearing a look of surprise.

At last the excitement subsided and the quadrilles began. I danced; I could not avoid it. I danced very badly, too, for a Wallachian prince. The quadrille at an end, I became a wall-flower, foolishly held in check by my myopia, not bold enough to sport a monocle, too much of a poet to wear spectacles, and always afraid to make the slightest movement lest I should strike my knee against the angle of a piece of furniture, or plant my nose between a woman's shoulders. Ere long hunger and thirst took a hand; but not for an empire would I have ventured to approach the buffet with the crowd. I watched for the moment

when it should be deserted. Meanwhile I mingled with the group of politicians, maintaining a serious expression, and pretending to look disdainfully upon the amusements of the small salon, whence there came to me, with the sound of laughter and of little spoons tinkling in porcelain cups, a subtle odor of steaming hot tea, of Spanish wines and sweetmeats. At last, when the dancing began again, I summoned courage. Behold me at last in the refreshment room; I am alone.

A bewildering spectacle, that buffet! in the light of the candles, with its glasses, its decanters, a white, dazzling pyramid of crystal, cool to look upon, like snow in the sunlight. I take a glass, fragile as a flower; I am very careful not to grasp it tightly, for fear of breaking the stem. What shall I pour into it? Come! courage, for no one sees me! I find a decanter, by feeling, without attempting to choose. It must be kirsch; one would say it was liquid diamond. Here goes then for a *petit verre* of kirsch; I love its odor, which makes me dream of tall trees, — its bitter, slightly wild odor. And behold me pouring out the transparent liqueur, drop by drop, like a gourmand. I raise the glass, I put out my lips. Horror! Pure water! What a wry face! Suddenly there is a twofold burst of laughter: a black coat and a pink dress flirting in a corner, whom I have not noticed and who are amused at my mistake. I try to replace the glass; but I am confused, my hand trembles, my sleeve catches on something or

other. A glass falls, two, three glasses! I turn, my coat-tails take a hand, and the white pyramid falls to the floor, with the scintillation of thousands of stars, the roar of a hurricane, the countless crashings of a crumbling iceberg.

The mistress of the house comes running in at the crash. Luckily she is as near-sighted as the Wallachian prince, and he is able to escape from the buffet unseen. My evening is spoiled, however. That massacre of glasses and decanters weighs upon me like a crime. I think of nothing but taking my leave. But Maman Dubois, dazzled by my principality, clings to me, insists upon it that I must not go without dancing with her daughter, — what do I say! with her two daughters. I excuse myself as well as I can. I escape from her, I am about to leave the house, when a tall old man, with a shrewd smile, the face of a bishop and a diplomat, stops me on the wing. It is Doctor Ricord, with whom I exchanged a few words a moment ago, and who, like the others, believes me to be a Wallachian. — "But, Prince, as you live at the Hôtel du Sénat, and we are near neighbors, wait for me. I have a seat for you in my carriage." — I would be glad to accept, but I came without an overcoat. What would Ricord say to a Wallachian prince without furs, and shivering in his dress-coat? Let us be off at once; let us trudge home on foot, through the snow and fog, rather than disclose our poverty. Still short-sighted and more confused than ever, I reach the door and am stealing away, not

without getting entangled in the hangings. "Does not Monsieur mean to take his overcoat?" a footman calls to me.

Behold me, at two o'clock in the morning, a long way from home, wandering through the streets, famished, frozen, and hardly a sou in my pocket. Suddenly hunger inspired me, a happy thought flashed through my mind: "Suppose I go to the market!" I had often heard of the market and of a certain Gaidras, open all night, who furnished a succulent cabbage stew for three sous. *Parbleu*, yes, I will go to the market. I will take my seat there, like a vagabond, a night prowler. My pride has vanished. The wind is freezing cold, my stomach is hollow. "My kingdom for a horse!" said the other fellow; but I, as I trot along: "My principality, my Wallachian principality for a good bowl of soup in a warm place!"

Externally it was a genuine hovel, that establishment of Gaidras, buried under the pillars of the old market, dirty and wretchedly lighted. Very often since then, when *noctambulism* was fashionable, we have passed whole nights there, a party of great men *in futuro*, with our elbows on the table, smoking and talking literature. But the first time, I confess, I nearly drew back, notwithstanding my hunger, at sight of those black walls, that thick smoke, those people at the tables, snoring with their backs against the wall, or lapping up their soup like dogs, those caps of sidewalk Don Juans, the enormous white felt

hats of the market men, and the coarse, healthy blouse of the market-gardener beside the greasy rags of the prowler about the barriers. I entered, however, and I must say that my black coat found company at once. They are by no means rare in Paris, black coats after midnight in winter, without overcoats, and hungry for three sous' worth of cabbage soup! Delicious cabbage soup, by the way; as fragrant as a garden, and smoking like a crater. I ate two portions, although the habit, inspired by healthy suspicion, of fastening the forks and spoons to the table with a chain, embarrassed me a little. I paid, and with my heart strengthened by that substantial fare I resumed my journey to the Latin Quarter.

You can imagine my return, the return of the poet trotting up Rue de Tournon, with his coat collar turned up, and with the elegantly-attired ghosts of a fashionable party dancing before his eyes, — which are heavy with fatigue and drowsiness, — blended with the famished figures of the market, and kicking his boots against the corner of the Hôtel du Sénat to knock off the snow, while the white lanterns of a coupé light up the front of a venerable mansion opposite, and Dr. Ricord's coachman calls: "Gate, please!" Life in Paris is made up of such contrasts.

"An evening wasted!" said my brother the next morning. "You were supposed to be a Wallachian prince, and you did n't start your volume. But there 's no reason to despair yet. You can make up for lost time at your party call." — A

party call for a glass of water — what irony![1] It took me quite two months to make up my mind to that call. One day, however, I conquered my irresolution. Beside her regular Wednesdays, Augustine Brohan gave more select morning receptions on Sunday. I betook myself resolutely to one of them.

In Paris a self-respecting morning reception does not dream of beginning before three or even four o'clock in the afternoon. I, ingenuous creature, took the word "morning" seriously, and made my appearance at precisely one o'clock, supposing that I was late even then.

"How early you come, Monsieur," said a page of five or six years, fair-haired, in a velvet jacket and embroidered breeches, who was riding through the verdant garden on a tall mechanical horse. That young man made a profound impression on me. I saluted the fair hair, the horse, the velvet, the embroidery, and, being too shy to turn back, I ascended the steps. Madame was finishing her toilet and I had to wait, all alone, half an hour. At last Madame appears, blinks at me, recognizes her Wallachian prince, and, for the sake of saying something, begins: "So you 're not at La Marche, Prince?" — At La Marche, I, who had never seen a horse-race or a jockey!

At last I began to feel ashamed, the blood

[1] It is impossible to translate this passage so as to make clear the play upon words in the French. The phrase used for "party-call" is *visite de digestion*. Then follows — "Digestion of a glass of water — what irony!"

rushed suddenly from my heart to my brain; and then that bright sunlight, that perfume of a garden in springtime entering through the open window, the absence of solemnity, that good-natured, smiling little woman, and a thousand other things gave me courage, and I opened my heart, I told everything, I confessed everything in a breath: that I was neither Wallachian nor prince, but a simple poet, and my adventure with the glass of kirsch, and my supper at the Market, and my pitiful return home, and my provincial terrors, and my myopia, and my hopes, — all heightened by my Southern accent. Augustine Brohan laughed like a madwoman. Suddenly the bell rang.

"Ah! my cuirassiers," she said.

"What cuirassiers?"

"Two cuirassiers who are sent to me from the camp at Châlons, and who have, it would seem, an amazing aptitude for acting."

I started to retire.

"No, no, stay; we are going to rehearse the *Lait d'Ânesse*, and you shall be the influential critic. Here, beside me, on this couch!"

Enter two tall fellows, bashful, tightly girthed, crimson-coated (one of them, I believe, is acting somewhere to-day). They arrange a screen, I take my position, and the rehearsal begins.

"They don't do badly," said Augustine Brohan to me in an undertone, "but what boots! — Monsieur le Critique, do you smell the boots?"

That semblance of intimacy with the cleverest

actress in Paris raised me to the seventh heaven of delight. I threw myself back on the couch, shaking my head, smiling with a knowing air. My coat fairly split with joy.

The most trivial of these details seems to me of enormous consequence to this day. But just see what perspective will do: — I had told Sarcey the comical story of my début in society. Sarcey repeated it one day to Augustine Brohan. And that ungrateful Augustine — whom I have not seen, by the way, for thirty years — swore with perfect sincerity that she knew nothing of me but my books. She had forgotten it all! yes, all of the details that filled so large a place in my life, — the broken glasses, the Wallachian prince, the rehearsal of the *Lait d'Ânesse*, and the cuirassiers' boots!

IV.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — "LITTLE WHAT'S-HIS-NAME." [1]

NOT one of my books was written under such capricious, such chaotic conditions as this. Neither plan nor notes, but a frantic improvisation on long sheets of wrapping-paper, rough and yellow, on which my pen stumbled as it ran, and which I threw fiercely on the floor as fast as they were blackened. The scene was two hundred leagues from Paris, between Beaucaire and Nîmes, in a large country house, isolated and deserted, which some relatives had obligingly placed at my disposal for a few months in winter. I had gone thither in search of the concluding scenes of a drama, the *dénouement* of which did not run smoothly from my pen: but the peaceful sadness of those vast fields of mulberry and olive trees, of undulating vineyards extending to the Rhone, the melancholy of that retreat in the heart of nature, were hardly adapted to the conventional requirements of a dramatic work. Probably, too, the air of the province, the sunshine lashed by the mistral, the proximity of the town where I was born,

[1] *Le Petit Chose* appeared in 1868, just after Daudet's marriage.

the names of the little villages where I played as an urchin — Bezouces, Redessan, Jonquières — stirred a whole world of old memories within me, and I soon laid aside my drama to undertake a sort of autobiography: *Little What's-His-Name, the Story of a Child.*

Begun in the early days of February, 1866, that work was continued energetically, without stopping for breath, until the second fortnight of March. Nowhere, at no time in my life, not even when a capricious inclination for silence and solitude caused me to shut myself up in the chamber of a lighthouse, have I ever lived so entirely alone. The house stood at some distance from the road, among the fields, separated even from the farmhouse appurtenant to it, whose various noises never reached my ears. Twice a day the *bailo's* (farmer's) wife served my meals at one end of the enormous dining-room, the shutters at all the windows save one being tightly closed. That Provençale, indistinct of speech, dark, flat-nosed like a Kaffir, unable to understand what strange necessity had brought me to the country in the middle of winter, could not shake off a certain distrust and fear of me, but would set down the plates hurriedly, and run away without a word, avoiding a backward glance. And hers was the only face I saw during that Stylite existence, my only distraction being a promenade toward evening in an avenue of tall plane-trees, shedding their bark to the wailing of the wind, in the melancholy light of a cold red sun, whose

early setting the frogs saluted with their discordant croaking.

As soon as the rough draft of my book was finished, I began at once upon the second copy, the painful part of the work, especially antipathetic to my nature as an *extemporiser*, an inventor; and I was working zealously at it with all my courage, when one morning the voice of the *bailesse* called to me vehemently in the local patois: "*Moussu moussu, vaqui un homo.*" (Monsieur, monsieur, here 's a man!)

The man was a Parisian, a newspaper man sent down to attend some meeting of local interest in the neighborhood, and, knowing that I was there, he came to seek news of me. He lunched with me, we talked newspapers, theatres, boulevards; the Paris fever attacked me, and at night I started for the capital with my intruder.

That abrupt breaking off of work in the middle, that laying aside of the book when the casting was half done, gives an accurate idea of my life in those days, open to all the winds of heaven, with only brief flights, impulses instead of wishes, never following aught save its caprice and the blind frenzy of a youth which threatened never to end. Having returned to Paris, I allowed my manuscript to lie for a long time and turn yellow in the bottom of a drawer, unable to find in my minutely subdivided existence the necessary leisure for a work requiring time and thought; but in the following winter, being annoyed by the thought of that unfinished book, I took the

violent course of tearing myself away from the distractions, the uproarious invasions which, at that time, made of my defenceless house a veritable gypsy camp, and I took up my quarters with a friend, in the small apartment then occupied by Jean Duboys on the entresol of Hôtel Lassus, Place de l'Odéon.

Jean Duboys, whose plays and novels had given him some celebrity, was a kindly, gentle, timid soul, with a childlike smile in a Robinson Crusoe beard, an unkempt, ragged beard, which seemed not to belong to that face. His work lacked character; but I loved his kindly disposition, I admired the courage with which he harnessed himself to interminable novels, cut up beforehand into regular slices, of which he wrote each day so many words, lines and pages. At last he had succeeded in having a great play called *La Volonté* (*The Will*) produced at the Comédie Française; and, although it was manifested in execrable verses, that *will* made a profound impression on me, who so utterly lacked anything of the kind. So that I went to cling to the skirts of its author, hoping to gain a taste for work from the contact with that indefatigable producer.

It is a fact that for two or three months I worked steadily at a small table near his, in the light from a low, arched window which formed a frame for the Odéon and its porch, and the deserted square, all gleaming with frost. From time to time Duboys, who was working at some magnificent Jack-in-the-Box affair, would stop to

describe the plots within plots of his novel, or to develop his theories concerning "the cylindrical motion of mankind." Indeed there were in that methodical and mild-mannered scribbler certain symptoms of the visionary, the *illuminé*, just as there was in his library a shelf reserved for the Cabala, for the Black Art, for the most curious lucubrations. Eventually that crack in his brain grew larger, allowing insanity to enter; and poor Jean Duboys died a madman at the close of the siege, leaving unfinished his great philosophic poem, *Enceldonne*, wherein all mankind was to revolve upon its cylinder. But who could have suspected at that time the melancholy destiny of that estimable, placid, sensible youth whom I watched enviously as he covered with his fine, regular handwriting the innumerable sheets of a novel for a petty newspaper, and assured himself by a glance at the clock from hour to hour that he had done his whole stint?

It was very cold that winter, and notwithstanding the baskets of coal consumed in the grate, we saw, during those toilsome vigils, indefinitely prolonged, the frost coat the window-panes with fanciful arabesques. Without, shivering shadows wandered through the opaque fog on the square; they were the audience coming from the Odéon, or the flock of young men and women on their way to Jardin Bullier, shouting and yelling to guide one another. On the evenings of masquerade balls, the narrow stairway of the hotel shook beneath a reckless downward scampering, accom-

panied every time by the jingling of the little bells on a fool's cap. The same fool's cap would ring out its carnival peal on its return when the night was far advanced; and often, when the hotel attendants were sleeping soundly and delayed admitting it, I could hear it shake its bells with a discouraged movement, with diminishing vigor, which made me think of Edgar Poe's *Cask of Amontillado*, of the poor imprisoned wretch, weary of imploring, of crying out, and betraying his presence only by the last convulsive movements of his cap. I have retained a charming impression of those winter nights during which the first part of *Little What's-His-Name* was written. The second part did not follow it until much later. Between the two an event intervened, totally unexpected by me, but most serious and decisive: I married. How did that come about? By what witchcraft was the inveterate Bohemian I then was, caught and laid under a spell? What charm was able to tether the everlasting caprice?

For months the manuscript was neglected, left lying in the bottom of the trunks that accompanied us on our wedding-journey, spread out upon hotel tables before an empty inkstand and a dry pen. It was so pleasant under the pines of Estérel, so pleasant to fish for sea-urchins near the cliffs of Pormieu! Afterward, the installation of the little household, the novelty of that domestic existence, the nest to build and to decorate, — so many pretexts for not working!

It was not until summer had come, under the dense foliage of the Château of Vigneux, whose Italian roof and lofty trees we could see spread out before us in the plain of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, that I returned to my interminable novel. Six delightful months, far from Paris, at that time turned topsy-turvy by the Exposition of 1867, which I would not even go and see.

I wrote *Little What's-His-Name* partly on a moss-covered bench in the depths of the park, disturbed by rabbits leaping and snakes crawling among the underbrush, partly in a boat on the pond in which were reflected all the changing hues of the summer sky, and partly, on rainy days, in our room, while my wife played Chopin, whom I can never hear without imagining the dripping of the rain on the swaying green branches of the hornbeams, the harsh cries of the peacocks, the tumult in the pheasant house, amid the odors of tree blossoms and damp wood. In the autumn the book, finished at last, appeared as a *feuilleton* in Paul Dalloz's *Petit Moniteur*, was published by Hetzel, and attained a measure of success, notwithstanding all that it lacks.

I have told how this, my first serious work, was undertaken, without reflection, on the wing as it were; but its greatest fault is that it was written prematurely. One is not mature enough at twenty-five to review and comment on his life. And *Little What's-His-Name*, especially in the first part, is in substance only this, an echo of my childhood and my youth.

Later I should have been less afraid to pause at the childish fancies of the beginning, and should have developed more fully those far-off memories which contain our initial impressions, so vivid and profound that all that comes after renews them without excelling them. In the more rapid movement of life, the onward flow of days and years, incidents fade from sight, are effaced by others, disappear, but that past remains, standing erect, luminous, bathed in the rays of dawn. You may forget a recent date, a face seen yesterday; you always remember the design of the wall-paper in the room in which you slept as a child, a name, a tune of the time when you did not know how to read. And how far memory travels in these backward journeys, striding across empty years, hiatuses, as in dreams! For instance, I can remember, in my third year, a display of fireworks at Nîmes in honor of some Saint-Louis, and that I was carried in somebody's arms to the top of a pine-covered hill. The slightest details of that event are still present in my memory, the murmur of the trees in the night wind — my first night out of-doors, doubtless — the noisy delight of the crowd, the "Ahs!" ascending and bursting with the rockets and suns, whose reflection lighted up the faces about me with a ghostly pallor.

I can see myself, at about the same period, mounted on a chair in front of a black table at the Brothers' school, and tracing my letters with chalk, proud of my precocious learning. And then there is the memory of the senses, those

sounds, those perfumes which come to you from the past as from another world, without the slightest trace of any accompanying event or emotion!

At the rear of the factory where *Little What's-His-Name* passed his childhood, near abandoned buildings whose doors were noisily slammed by a breeze of solitude, there were some tall rose-laurels, in the open air, giving forth a bitter fragrance which haunts me still after forty years. I would that there were a little more of that fragrance in the first pages of my book.

The chapters on Lyon are too short; I allowed many vivid and delightful sensations to escape me there. Not that my childish eyes could have grasped the originality, the greatness of that manufacturing city, with its suggestion of mysticism due to the permanent mist which rises from its rivers, permeates its walls and its people, and imbues the productions of its writers and its artists — Ballanche, Flandrin, de Laprade, Chenavard, Puvis de Chavannes — with a vague Germanic melancholy. But if the mental individuality of the province escaped me, the enormous hive of toil of the Croix-Rousse, humming with its hundred thousand looms, and, on the hill opposite, Fourvières carolling and marching in procession through the narrow lanes of its slope, lined with religious images and stalls for the sale of relics, left on my mind an ineffaceable impression, for which a place was reserved in *Little What's-His-Name.*

The points that I consider to be faithfully de-

picted in the book are the ennui, the sense of banishment, the distress of a Southern family lost in the Lyonnese fog, — the change from one province to another, change of climate, customs and language, the mental distance which facility of communication does not lessen. I was ten years old at the time, and being already tormented by the longing to go outside of myself, to become incarnate in other people, due to a dawning mania for observing and annotating mankind, it was my chief amusement, during my walks, to select some passer-by and follow him about through Lyon, wherever his saunterings or his business led him, to try to identify myself with his life and comprehend his secret preoccupations.

One day, however, when I had escorted in that way a very beautiful lady in a bewitching costume as far as a low house with drawn blinds, the ground floor occupied by a *café chantant*, where hoarse voices were singing to the accompaniment of harps, my parents, to whom I confided my surprise, forbade my continuing my wandering studies and observations of real life.

But how could I, while I was marking the stages of my adolescence, fail to say a word of the religious paroxysms which shook *Little What's-His-Name* violently between his tenth and his twelfth year, of his revolts against the absurdities and mysteries in which he was compelled to believe, revolts followed by fits of remorse, of despair which caused the child to prostrate himself in dark corners of the deserted church, whither he

furtively crept, dreading and ashamed to be seen? Above all, how could I have attributed to the little man's exterior aspect that gentleness and air of good-breeding, without mentioning the devilish existence into which he abruptly plunged about his thirteenth year, in a desperate longing to live, to exert his strength, to tear himself away from the unrelieved gloom, the tears that stifled him beneath his parents' roof, darkened from day to day by financial ruin. It was the effervescence of the Southern temperament and imagination too sternly compressed. The delicate and timid child was transformed, became bold, vehement, ready for all sorts of mad freaks. He played truant, passed his days on the water, in the crowd of skiffs, barges and tugs, rowed about in the rain with a pipe between his teeth and a flask of absinthe or eau-de-vie in his pocket, escaped a thousand deaths, from the paddles of a steamboat, from collision with a coal-barge, from the current which threw him against the piles of a bridge or under a towing rope, drowned, fished up, his head split open, cuffed by bargemen who were annoyed by the awkwardness of the little monkey too weak to handle his oars; and in that fatigue, those blows, those perils, he was conscious of a savage joy, a broadening of his existence and of the dark horizon.

In some of the *Monday Tales* there are some sketches of that troubled period, made at a later date; but how much more valuable they would have been in the *Story of a Child.*

Even then that harebrained *Little What's-His-Name* possessed a strange faculty which he has never lost, the gift of seeing himself, of judging himself, of surprising himself red-handed in all sorts of crimes, as if his footsteps were always attended by a pitiless and redoubtable spy. Not what is known as conscience, — for conscience preaches, scolds, takes a hand in all our acts, modifies them or arrests them. And then we can put that excellent conscience to sleep with ready excuses or subterfuges, while the witness of whom I speak never relaxed his severity, never interfered in anything, simply watched. It was like an inward glance, impassive and fixed, a lifeless, cold *double*, who, during *Little What's-His-Name's* most violent outbreaks, kept an eye upon everything, took notes, and said the next day: "This is for us two to settle!" Read the chapter entitled: "He is Dead! Pray for Him!" an absolutely true page of my life. My older brother's death was announced to us in just that way, and in my ears there still rings my poor father's cry when he divined that his son was dead; so heartrending, so poignant was that first loud outcry of human grief within my hearing, that all night, as I lay weeping in my despair, I surprised myself repeating: "He is dead," in my father's tone. In that way was revealed to me the existence of my *double*, of the implacable witness who, in the midst of our mourning, had retained, as on the stage, the faithful echo of a death-shriek, and tried it upon my despairing

lips. I regret, on re-reading my book, to find therein not a word of these confessions, especially in the first part, where the character of Daniel Eyssette resembles me so strongly.

Yes, he is myself, that *Little What's-His-Name*, compelled to earn his living at sixteen in that horrible calling of school-usher, and performing its duties in the heart of a province, of a region of smelting-furnaces, which sent me vulgar little mountain imps, who insulted me in their harsh, brutal Cevennese patois. Defenceless against the persecution of those little monsters, surrounded by bigots and pedants who despised me, I underwent the degrading humiliations of the poor man.

In that depressing prison-house I had no other sympathy than that of the priest whom I have called Abbé Germane, and of the horrible "Bamban," whose absurd little face, always smeared with ink and mud, looks mournfully into mine while I write these lines.

I recall another of my pupils, a refined, unusual character, to whom I became attached and for whom I set special tasks, solely for the joy of seeing that youthful intellect develop like a bud in the spring. The child, being deeply touched by my interest in him, had made me promise to pass my vacation with him in the country. His parents would be so glad to know me, to thank me. And so, on the day of the distribution of prizes, after a great triumph which he owed to me in some degree, my pupil came and took my hand,

and politely led me to his people, — father, mother, fashionably-dressed sisters, — all of whom were engaged in loading the prizes on a great break. I must have cut a sorry figure in my threadbare clothes, or have had something about me to offend the eye; for the family barely glanced at me, and the poor little fellow went away, with tears in his eyes, heartily ashamed because of his own disappointment and mine. Humiliating, cruel moments, which wither, which degrade life! I trembled with rage in my little room under the eaves, while the carriage bore away the child, laden with wreaths, and the vulgar bourgeois who had wounded me in such a dastardly way.

A long time after I left that dungeon at Alais, it often happened that I woke in the middle of the night, weeping bitterly; I had dreamed that I was still an usher and a martyr. Luckily that cruel début in life did not poison my mind; and I do not curse too bitterly that wretched time which enabled me to endure lightly the trials of my literary novitiate and my first years in Paris. Those were hard years, and the story of *Little What's-His-Name* conveys no idea of them.

There is almost nothing taken from real life in the second part except my arrival without shoes, my blue stockings and my rubbers, and my brother's welcome, the ingenious devotion of that Mère Jacques, whose real name is Ernest Daudet, who is the radiant figure of my child-

hood and early youth. Aside from my brother all the characters are purely imaginary.

I had a plentiful supply of models, however, and models of the most interesting and rarest types; but, as I said just now, I wrote that book when I was too young. One whole stage of my existence was too near me; I was not far enough away to see it distinctly, and, not seeing it, I invented. For instance, *Little What's-His-Name* was never an actor; indeed he was never able to say a single word in public. The porcelain trade also is unfamiliar to him. Pierrotte and her black eyes, the lady on the first floor, Coucoublanc her negress, are done with spirit, as the painters say; but they lack the relief, the real articulation of life. So it is with the literary silhouettes, in which some people have fancied that they could detect insulting personalities of which I never dreamed.

Let me point out, however, one other of the realities of my book — the chamber under the eaves, over against the steeple of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, in a house now demolished, so that my glance is unsatisfied whenever I seek with my eyes, as I pass, the scene of so many follies, of so much misery, of so many long vigils of toil or of gloomy, desperate loneliness.

V.

THE LITERARY SALONS.[1]

I DO not think that there is a single one left to-day. We have other salons, more "in the swim," as they say: political salons, — Madame Edmond Adam's, Madame d'Haussonville's, all white or all red, where prefects are made and ministers unmade, and where Messieurs the Princes or Gambetta sometimes appear on great occasions. Then there are the salons where the guests enjoy themselves, — I dare not say try to enjoy themselves. Memories and regrets! they sup and play cards, they renew the parties at Compiègne as far as they can: attractive conservatories, a fragile shelter, beneath whose crystal roof blooms in all its trivial splendor the odorless flower of a purely superficial and worldly life. But the genuine literary salon, the salon where, around a charming and mature Muse, men of letters, or those who deem themselves such, assemble once a week to repeat little poems, dipping little dry cakes in a little tea, — that species of salon, I say, has definitively disappeared. Although I am not an old man, I have known some of those blue salons of

[1] Written in 1879, for the *New Times* (*Novoe-Vremya*) of St. Petersburg.

Arthenice,[1] which are to-day relegated to the provinces, more out of fashion than the guitar, the "void in the soul" and album verses.

Suppose we breathe upon our memories of twenty years since. *Pouf! pouf! pouf!* The dust rises in a fine cloud, and in that cloud, as distinctly as if for a fairy spectacle, the amiable features of good Madame Ancelot[2] assume form and substance. Madame Ancelot lived at that time on Rue Saint-Guillaume, a short provincial street in the heart of Paris, overlooked by Haussmann, where the grass grows between the pavements, where the rumbling of carriage wheels is never heard, where the tall houses, too tall for their three floors, allow only a cold and distant reflection of the daylight to find its way. The old, silent mansion, with the shutters of its balcony windows always closed, its front door never open, had the air of having slept for centuries beneath a magician's wand. And the interior fulfilled the promises of the street front: a white-walled hall, a dark, echoing stairway, high ceilings, broad windows surmounted by paintings set in panels. It was all faded and pale, seemed really to have ceased to live, and in the midst of

[1] Arthenice was an anagram of Catherine, Marquise de Rambouillet, whose salon was so famous in the later years of the 17th century. The anagram was invented by Malherbe.

[2] Madame Ancelot, born at Dijon in 1818, was a dramatist and author of some pretensions. She wrote at first in collaboration with her husband, "seeking only the pleasure of expressing her ideas," but after her comedy, *Un Mariage Raisonnable*, was produced at the Français in 1835, she worked independently.

it, in her proper frame, Madame Ancelot, dressed in white, plump and wrinkled like a little red apple, — in a word, exactly as we picture to ourselves the fairies in children's tales, who never die, but who grow old for thousands of years. Madame Ancelot loved birds, therein again resembling the good fairies. All around the salon, covering the walls, were tiers upon tiers of cages, chirping like the show-window of a bird-fancier's on the quay. But the very birds seemed to be singing old-fashioned tunes. In the place of honor, well in sight and in an excellent light, was a large portrait by Baron Gerard, hung at the proper angle, representing the Muse of the domicile with her hair dressed like a child's, in a costume cut after the fashion of the Restoration, and smiling with the smile of those days; the pose was three-quarters profile, as if about to fly, *à la Galatea*, the better to show a bit of a marvellously white and well-rounded shoulder. Forty years after the portrait was made, at the time of which we write, Madame Ancelot still wore low-necked dresses, but truth compels us to say that she no longer displayed the white, well-rounded shoulders painted by Baron Gerard. But what cared the good woman for that? She imagined in 1858 that she was still the fair Madame Ancelot of the year 1828, when Paris was applauding her play, *Marie, ou les Trois Époques*. Indeed, there is nothing to give her warning; everything about her fades and grows old with her: the roses in the carpets, the ribbons of the hangings,

persons and memories; and while the century advances, that arrested life, that household of another age, motionless as a vessel at anchor, bury themselves silently in the past.

A simple remark would break the spell. But who will pronounce those sacrilegious words, who will dare to say: "We are growing old!" The habitués of the house less than others, for they too are of the same epoch; they too fancy that they are not growing old. There is M. Patin, the illustrious M. Patin, lecturer at the Sorbonne, playing the young man yonder by the window, in the corner at the left. He is a little man, as white as snow, but so jauntily curled and perfumed, and quivering with circumspection, as befits a University man of the First Empire. And Viennet, the Voltairian fabulist, as long and skinny as the heron of his dull fables. The god of the salon, surrounded, admired, petted, was Alfred de Vigny, a great poet, but a poet of another age — a strange, superannuated creature, with his archangel's expression and his weeping white hair, too long for his short figure. When he died, Alfred de Vigny bequeathed his parrot to Madame Ancelot. The parrot took his place in the centre of the salon, on a varnished perch. The old habitués stuffed him with sweetmeats; he was de Vigny's parrot! Some jokers dubbed him Eloa,[1] because of his long beak and mystic eye. But I am getting ahead of my story; at the time when I was presented at

[1] De Vigny, author of *Cinq-Mars*, died in 1862. He published in 1822 *Eloa, ou la Sœur des Anges.*

Madame Ancelot's, the poet was still alive, and the parrot's shrill little old-fashioned note was not yet added to the formidable chirping which, by way of protest, I imagine, arose from all the cages when M. Viennet attempted to repeat a few verses.

Sometimes the salon renewed its youth. On those days we met there Lachaud, the famous advocate, with Madame Ancelot's daugher, whom he had married: she a little inclined to melancholy, he stout and sleek, with a fine head worthy of a Roman, of a jurist of the Later Empire. Poets: Octave Lacroix, author of the *Chanson d'Avril*, of *L'Amour et son Train*, acted at the Théâtre Français; he made a very deep impression on me, although he was most benignant in appearance, being Sainte-Beuve's secretary. Emmanuel des Essarts came there with his father, a distinguished writer, librarian at Sainte-Geneviève. Emmanuel des Essarts was at that time a very young man, had hardly made his début in literature, and still wore, if I remember aright, the green palm-leaf of the Normal School pupils in his buttonhole. He fills now the chair of Literature in the Faculty of Clermont, which does not prevent his publishing one or two volumes a year on an average, in which are some fine poems. A delightful professor, as you see, with a sprig of myrtle in his cap. And then the ladies, — lady poets like Madame Anaïs Ségalas, and from time to time a newly discovered young Muse, with an azure eye, hair like refined gold, in the then

somewhat out-of-date attitude of the Delphine Gays and Elisa Mercœurs. One fine day appeared the fair Jenny Sabatier, whose real name was Tirecuir,[1] a most prosaic name for a Muse. I too, was sometimes asked for verses like the others, but it seems that I was timid and that my voice showed it. — "Louder!" Madame Ancelot would always say, "louder; Monsieur de la Rochejacquelein does n't hear!" — There were half-a-dozen of them like that, deaf as Etruscan pots, unable to hear a word, but always very attentive, with the left hand in a circle around the ear by way of speaking trumpet. Gustave Nadaud, for his part, always made himself heard. Short and thickset, with a turned-up nose and a large, expansive face, affecting an amiable rusticity which did not lack charm in that drowsy circle, the author of *Les Deux Gendarmes* would seat himself at the piano, sing at the top of his voice, pound the keys, and wake everybody. How popular he was in consequence! We were all jealous of him. — Sometimes, too, an actress anxious for a start would come there and recite poetry. There was a tradition that Rachel had recited several stanzas in Madame Ancelot's salon; a picture near the mantelpiece attested the fact. People continued to recite stanzas there, but they were not Rachels. That picture was not the only one; they came to light in every corner, all from the hand of Madame Ancelot, who did not disdain to handle the brush in her hours of leisure, and all devoted

[1] Draw-leather.

to her salon, destined to perpetuate the memory of some momentous event in that miniature world. The curious can find reproductions of them (made, O irony! by E. Benassit, the most cruelly sceptical of painters), forming a sort of autobiography: *Mon Salon*, by Madame Ancelot, published by Dentu. Each one of the faithful has his or her counterfeit presentment therein, and I think that mine is somewhere there, rather in the background.

That slightly heterogeneous party assembled every Tuesday on Rue Saint-Guillaume. They arrived late, and for this reason: on Rue du Cherche-Midi, two steps away, there was a rival salon, Madame Mélanie Waldor's,[1] set up there as if for the express purpose of serving as a permanent protest. The two Muses had formerly been intimate friends; indeed, Madame Ancelot had to some extent launched Mélanie in society. Then one day Mélanie shook herself free, and raised altar against altar: a repetition of Madame du Deffand's experience with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Mélanie Waldor wrote; we have had from her hand novels, poems, and a play, *La Tirelire de Jeannette!* Alfred de Musset, one day when he was in a savage humor, wrote some crushing, superb lines about her, a highly-spiced blend of Arétin and Juvenal, which, in default of anything better, will bear the Muse's name to

[1] Madame Waldor was older than Madame Ancelot, having been born in 1796. She was a very prolific writer of history, novels, sketches of manners, poetry and dramatic works.

posterity, on the wings of secret publications. Pray, what had Mélanie Waldor done to the *enfant terrible?* I remember her very well, all in velvet, with black hair — the hair of a century-old crow who persists in not growing gray — stretched out on her couch, languid and drooping, with attitudes indicative of a broken heart. But the eye kindled, the mouth became viperous at once when *She* was mentioned. *She* was the other, the enemy, dear old Madame Ancelot. There was war to the knife between those two. Madame Waldor purposely chose the same day, and about eleven o'clock, when you tried to steal away, in order to run across the street, cold glances nailed you at the door. You must needs remain, wag your tongue, blackguard Père Ancelot and outdo yourself in scandalous little stories. Opposite, they took their revenge by repeating innumerable mysterious legends concerning Madame Waldor's political influence.

How much time was wasted, how many hours frittered away in those venomous or absurd little trifles, in that atmosphere of moss-grown little poems and rancid little calumnies, on those pasteboard Parnassuses, whence no stream flows, where no bird sings, where the poetic laurel has the color of the green leather badge of a chief of department! And to think that I too have climbed the slopes of those Parnassuses! One must see everything in one's youth! That will last as long as my coat.

Poor dear coat, how many narrow halls it

rubbed with its skirts in those days, how many stair-rails it polished with its sleeves! I remember sporting it in Madame la Comtesse Chodsko's salon. The countess's husband was an excellent old scientist who seldom appeared and who counted for little. She must have been very beautiful; she was a tall, straight, thin woman, with an imperious, almost ugly manner. It was said that Murger, being deeply impressed by her, took her for the model of his *Madame Olympe*. Murger did, you know, undertake a brief journey in the first society, and that particular social circle was the one he discovered in his innocence. Somewhat confined quarters, truly, for the first society, and a little too far from the ground, that third floor suite on Rue de Tournon, consisting of three cold, bare little rooms, with windows looking on the courtyard. People came there, however, and the company was by no means commonplace. It was there that I first met Philarète Chasles,[1] restless genius, nervous pen, of the race of the Saint-Simons and Michelets, whose astounding *Mémoires*, quarrelsome, mischievous, made up of thrusts and parries, and filled, as it were, from the first chapter to the last, with the incessant clash of foils and crossed swords, appeared recently, and are allowed to pass almost unnoticed in the hurly-

[1] Philarète Chasles was one of those whom the late James Russell Lowell called Balzacidae. He wrote a very long and elaborate preface to the second edition of Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin* (*Magic Skin*), which is reprinted in M. de Lovenjoul's *Histoire des Œuvres de Balzac*. His miscellaneous works fill eleven volumes.

burly of a Paris that is really too indifferent to anything unconnected with painting or politics. A man of letters to the core, but tormented all his life, as Balzac was, by an appetite for a broader life and for dandyism, he lived, a librarian, at the very threshold of the Academy, which, no one knows why, would have none of him; and he died of cholera at Venice.

I also met there Pierre Véron, Philibert Audebrand, and an interesting couple, very interesting, and at the same time very congenial, whom I ask your leave to introduce to you. We are in the salon, let us sit down and watch: the door opens, enter Philoxène Boyer and his wife. Philoxène Boyer! another of those extraordinary youths, the terror and chastisement of families, chance productions which no theory of atavism explains, seeds brought no one knows whence, on the wings of the wind, across the seas, and some fine day blooming in a field of cabbages, in the midst of a bourgeois kitchen-garden, with their outlandishly irregular foliage, and their flowers of strange and gorgeous coloring! The son of that Boyer who knew more Greek than any man in France of his time; born between two pages of a lexicon; knowing nothing, in his childhood, of walks or of gardens outside the learned garden of Greek roots; fed on Greek, oiled with Greek, Philoxène with his Greek name seemed inexorably destined to see that name inscribed on marble, beside the Eggers and Estiennes in the Pantheon of Greek scholars. But Père Boyer reckoned

without Balzac. Philoxène, like all schoolboys of that day, had Balzac in his desk; so that, having inherited a hundred thousand francs from his mother, he could not come soon enough to Paris to squander the hundred thousand francs as Balzac's characters do. His project was carried out in the most orthodox fashion: bouquets given away, tips of gloved fingers kissed, duchesses subjugated, girls with golden eyes purchased, — nothing was left undone, and the whole was crowned by a wild revel after the style of the one described in *La Peau de Chagrin.* The *peau de chagrin,* that is to say, the hundred thousand francs, had lasted just six months. The Hellenist's son had enjoyed himself prodigiously. With empty pockets and his brain full of rhymes, he declared that he proposed thenceforth to carry on the trade of poet. But it was written that Philoxène, so long as he lived, should be *a victim of books.* Having left Balzac, he fell in with Shakespeare; Balzac had consumed only his five-franc pieces, Shakespeare consumed his life! — One morning, perhaps as the result of a dream, Philoxène awoke, absolutely infatuated with the works of Shakespeare. And as that self-willed, fragile creature, of mildly vehement disposition, could do nothing by halves, he devoted himself to Shakespeare body and soul! To study Shakespeare, to learn him by heart, from his least known sonnets to those of his plays of which the authorship is most disputed, was a mere nothing, and it took only a few months. But Philoxène

aimed higher than that: proposing to write a book upon Shakespeare, a complete, definitive book, a monument, in short, worthy of the god, he conceived the impossible project of reading, in the first place to extract its quintessence, everything (everything, I say, not excepting the most insignificant article or the most trivial document) — everything that had been published concerning Shakespeare from two hundred years ago down to our own times. A mass of dusty folios sufficient to build a Babel: and the Babel, alas! was soon built in Philoxène's brain. I have seen him in his own home, no longer master of himself, overflowed on all sides by Shakespeare. Five thousand, ten thousand volumes on Shakespeare, of all sizes, in all languages, rising to the ceiling, blocking the windows, crushing the tables, encroaching on the chairs, piled up, toppling over, consuming air and light, and in the midst of them Philoxène, taking notes, while his brats howled about him. For he had married, with no very clear idea why, and had had children between the reading of two books. Over-excited by his fixed idea, talking to himself when he was alone, with his eyes fixed on the horizon, lost in reverie, he walked through Paris like a blind man. His wife, a gentle creature, inclined to melancholy, followed him everywhere, acted as his Antigone. I used to see them at the Café de la Régence, always together. She would prepare his absinthe with great care, a mild absinthe, barely tinged with greenish opal, for the enthusiastic poet

needed no stimulants. She was always seen, too, in the front row at the conferences held by Philoxène in the hall on Quai Malaquais, always upon Shakespeare. Sometimes the word would not come — a painful spectacle! — the orator would seek it, clench his fists in vain. Every one felt that in that overcrowded brain ideas and sentences jostled one another, unable to come forth, like a frantic crowd around a door in a conflagration. The wife, divining the word, would whisper it gently, maternally. The sentence would come forth and fly away; and at such times that painful improvisation, that frantic gesticulation, were illumined by vivid flashes, eloquent outbursts. There was a genuine poet at the core of that gentle monomaniac. Philoxène ended his life sadly, working at obscure tasks to earn his livelihood and buy books, always dreaming of his great monograph, but never able to write it. For he wished to read everything concerning Shakespeare; and every day books appeared in England, in Germany, which went beyond him and compelled him to postpone his first line until the morrow. He died, leaving no effects save two short plays written in collaboration with Théodore de Banville, an unfinished *Polichinello*, original in design, which was afterwards retouched by adapters, and a volume of verse collected and published by the exertions of his friends. They obtained a small stamp office for his widow. After long mourning her poet, the worthy, simple-hearted woman married again

two years ago. Guess whom she married? The postman!

Was I not justified in directing your attention to Philoxène and his wife? For my own part, I can never forget them, and I can still see them, reserved and shy, in the corner of the little salon; he twitching nervously, she with her knees pressed closely together, marvelling; while Pagans, recently arrived from the land of citron, sings his Spanish ballads; while Madame la Comtesse Chodsko serves light, weak tea — genuine exile's tea! — to superb Polish dames, with their luxuriant hair twisted in heavy masses on the neck, gleaming hair of the color of parched corn; and while worthy Père Chodsko, as the clock strikes twelve, appears in the doorway, with the regularity of a cuckoo, with a candlestick in his hand, casts a circular glance on the assembled company, mutters with a marked Slavic accent a "Good-evening, Moussiou," to the men who are presented to him, then disappears, automatically, between the folds of a portière.

The desire to display my coat carried me even farther sometimes, way to the other extremity of Paris, on the other side of the Seine. I followed the quays a long, long while, inhaling the odor of wild beasts, listening to the lions roar behind the iron fence of the Jardin des Plantes; I crossed a bridge, I gazed by gaslight or moonlight at the fanciful pediments and curiously pierced turret of the ruins of the Hôtel de Lavalette; and so I arrived at the Arsenal, — at the old Arsenal, to-

day a library, with its long iron railing, its stoop, its doorway of the time of Vauban, whereon bombs are carved, — at the Arsenal, still full to overflowing with souvenirs of Charles Nodier.[1] Nodier was no longer there: the famous little green salon, from which romanticism took its flight, which has seen Musset, Hugo and George Sand weep over the adventures of Brisquet's dog, the little green salon, more celebrated, and justly so, than Arthenice's blue salon, was occupied now by M. Eugène Loudun. The spirit of revolution, the spirit of freedom, no longer fluttered in its curtains. After the champions of romanticism, poet workmen, Christian rhymers had found their way into that eighth castle of the King of Bohemia. Of the old romanticists a single one remained, unswervingly faithful at his post, as stanch and straight in his frockcoat as a Huguenot cavalryman in his coat of mail.

That one was Amédée Pommier, a wonderful workman in *bons-mots* and rhymes, a friend of the Dondeys and Pétrus Borels, the author of *L'Enfer*, of *Crâneries et Dettes de Cœur*, excellent books with flaming titles, a feast for men of letters, a terror to the Academies, and full of lines as noisy and as brilliant in coloring as an aviary of tropical birds.

Amédée Pommier was poor and dignified. He lived in close retirement, earning his living by

[1] A most attractive picture of Nodier's life at the Arsenal will be found in the first chapter of the elder Dumas's *Woman with the Velvet Necklace.*

making translations for Hachette, which he did not sign. It is an interesting fact that it was in collaboration with Amédée Pommier that Balzac, always possessed with the idea of writing a great classical comedy, undertook *Orgon*, five acts in verse, as a sequel to *Tartufe*.[1]

In that green salon at the Arsenal I also met M. Henri de Bornier. He often repeated some very clever little poems, one of which I have always remembered; each couplet ended with this refrain:

"Eh! eh! je ne suis pas si bête!"[2]

No such fool, indeed! for M. de Bornier wrote *La Fille de Roland*, which achieved a great success at the Théâtre Français, and will carry its author into the Academy. On certain evenings there was a great clearing of decks, screens were produced, chairs without arms and chairs with arms arranged in lines, and we acted charades. I have acted in charades there, I confess it! and I can see myself at this moment in a Turkish bazaar, as a Circassian girl, swathed in long white veils. I had Madame de Bornier for my companion in slavery. M. de Bornier, in turban and belted tunic reaching to the knees, made an apology for a sultan, and purchased us. As for the slave-merchant, he was, by your leave, no less a per-

[1] Of *Orgon*, M. de Lovenjoul says in his *Histoire des Œuvres de Balzac*, "that it was never published and never acted."

[2] "Ha! ha! I'm no such fool!"

sonage than M. L——, senator, former minister, then much in the public eye, and afterwards convicted of financial irregularities. The fall of the Empire treated us to many surprises; and this great Parisian highroad sometimes develops strange windings!

VI.

MY DRUMMER.[1]

I WAS at home one morning, still in bed, when some one knocked.

"Who is that?"

"A man with a great box!"

I supposed that it was some package from the railway station; but, instead of the porter I expected to see, a short man with the round hat and short jacket of Provençal shepherds appeared before me. Jet black eyes, mild and restless, a face at once ingenuous and obstinate, and, half lost beneath heavy moustaches, an accent perfumed with garlic, probably not southern. The man said to me: "I am Buisson!" and handed me a letter, on the envelope of which I at once recognized the beautiful, fine handwriting, regular and placid, of Frédéric Mistral the poet. His letter was short.

"I send you my friend Buisson; he is a drummer, and goes to Paris to exhibit his talents; pilot him about."

[1] *Mon Tambourinaire.* — The *tambourin* is a species of drum (*tambour*), smaller and longer than the ordinary drum, and is beaten with a single drum-stick to accompany the shrill notes of a *galoubet* (flute), which is held to the mouth with the other hand.

Pilot a drummer! These Southerners stick at nothing. Having read the letter, I turned to Buisson again.

"So you 're a drummer?"

"Yes, Monsieur Daudet, the best of all drummers; I 'll show you!"

And he went to fetch his instruments, which he had discreetly deposited on the landing behind the door, before entering my room; a small, square, flat box, and a huge cylinder covered with green serge, similar in dimensions and shape to the monstrous affairs which the hurdy-gurdy men trundle through the streets. The little flat box contained the *galoubet*, the simple rustic flute which goes *tu-tu* — while the drum goes *pan-pan!* The veiled cylinder was the drum itself. Such a drum, my friends! the tears came to my eyes when I saw it unpacked: an authentic drum of the age of Louis XIV., touching and laughable at once by reason of its huge size, groaning like an old man if one so much as touched it with the end of the finger, made of fine walnut embellished with light carved work, polished, delicate, light, resonant, and made supple, as it were, by the mellowing hand of time. Buisson, solemn as a pope, fastened his drum to his left arm, took the flute in three fingers of his left hand — you must have seen the instruments and the attitude in some eighteenth century engraving or on a plate of Vieux-Moustier ware — and, wielding the little ivory-tipped drumstick with his right hand, he touched up the big drum, which, with its quav-

ering note, its constant locust-like humming, marks the time and plays the bass to the sharp, piercing chirp of the flute. — *Tu-tu ! Pan-pan !* — Paris was far away and so was the winter. — *Tu-tu ! pan-pan ! tu-tu !* — Bright sunlight and warm perfumes filled my room. I seemed to be transported to Provence, on the shore of the blue sea, in the shade of the poplars of the Rhône; serenades with voice and instruments arose beneath my windows, they sang Noël, they danced the Olivettes, and I saw the *farandole* wind in and out under the leafy plane-trees on the village squares, over the wild lavender on the scorched hillsides, in the white dust of the highroads, disappearing to appear again, more and more excited and wild, while the drummer followed slowly, never quickening his pace, — very sure that the dance will not leave the music behind, — grave and solemn, and limping a little with a movement of the knee to push the instrument forward at every step.

There are so many things in an air upon a drum! Yes, and many others, too, which you might not have seen, perhaps, but which I certainly saw. The Provençal imagination is made that way; it is of tinder, kindles quickly, even at seven o'clock in the morning, and Mistral was right to rely upon my enthusiasm. Buisson, too, became excited. He told me of his struggles, his efforts, and how he had stopped flute and drum half-way down the slope as they were falling into the abyss.

Some savages, it seems, wished to perfect the

galoubet, to add two holes. A *galoubet* with five holes! what sacrilege! He clung religiously to the *galoubet* with three holes, the *galoubet* of his ancestors, without fear of rivalry, however, in respect to the richness of the chords, the animation of the variations and trills. "It came to me," he said modestly and with a vague suggestion of inspiration, with that peculiar accent which would make the most touching of funeral orations ridiculous, — "it came to me one night when I was sitting under an olive-tree listening to a nightingale, and I thought: 'What, Buisson, the good Lord's bird sings like that, and you can't do with three holes what he does with just one hole?'" Rather an idiotic way of putting it! But it seemed charming to me that day.

A true Southerner never really enjoys his emotion unless he can induce somebody else to share it. I admired Buisson: one could not help admiring him. Behold me, therefore, on my journey through Paris, exhibiting my drummer, putting him forward as a phenomenon, enlisting my friends, arranging for an evening party at my house. Buisson played, described his struggles, said again: "It came to me." He was decidedly fond of that phrase, and my friends pretended to be overcome with admiration when they went away.

That was only the first step. I had a play in rehearsal at the Ambigu Theatre, a Provençal play! I mentioned Buisson, his drum and his flute, to Hostein, then manager, with such eloquence as you

can imagine! For a week I pestered him. At last he said to me: —

"Suppose we bring your drummer into the play? It lacks a nail; he may perhaps serve to hang success on."

I am sure that the Provençal did not sleep that night. The next day we all three took a cab, he and the drum and I; and at "noon for the fourth," as the notices of rehearsals put it, we alighted amid a group of idlers, attracted by the strange aspect of the machine, at the shamefaced, low door which, in the most sumptuous theatres, affords a far from triumphal entry to authors, artists, and employés.

"Good God, how dark it is!" whispered the Provençal, as we followed the long corridor, damp and windy, like all theatre corridors. — "Good God, how cold and dark it is!" — The drum seemed to be of the same opinion, and banged against all the angles of the corridor, against every step of the spiral stairway, with ominous vibrations and rumblings. At last we arrived, limping, on the stage. The rehearsal was in progress. It is a horrible thing to see the theatre at such a time, in the privacy of its undress uniform, without the excitement, the life, the paint, and the illumination of the evening: people full of business, walking softly and speaking low, depressing shades on the banks of the Styx, or miners in the depths of a mine; an odor of dampness and of escaping gas; men and things, — men running hither and thither and scenery jumbled fantastically together, everything

of the color of ashes in the grudging light of infrequent lamps and gas-jets, veiled like Davy lamps; and to make the darkness denser, the impression of being underground, intensified from time to time as a door opens up above, on the second or third floor of the dark auditorium, and admits a ray of daylight as if through the distant opening of a well. That spectacle, being entirely a novel one to my compatriot, disconcerted him a little. But the rascal soon recovered himself and courageously allowed himself to be stationed all alone in the darkness at the very rear of the stage, on a cask which they had prepared for him. With his drum there were two casks, one on top of the other. In vain did I protest; in vain did I say: "In Provence drummers play while walking, and your cask's an impossibility;" Hostein assured me that my drummer was a minstrel, and that a minstrel could not be imagined otherwise than as sitting on a cask on the stage. The cask it is, then! Indeed, Buisson, full of confidence, had already climbed upon it, and said to me as he moved his feet about to establish his equilibrium: "It makes no difference!" So we left him with his flute at his mouth and his drumstick in his hand, behind a virgin forest of flies, uprights, pulleys, and ropes, and took up our positions, manager, author, and actors, at the front of the stage, as far away as possible, to judge of the effect.

"It came to me," sighed Buisson, "one night, under an olive-tree, while I was listening to a nightingale."

"All right! all right! play us something," I cried, irritated already by his eternal phrase.

Tu-tu! Pan-pan!

"Hush! he's beginning."

"Now we will see what the effect is!"

Great God! what an effect was produced upon that sceptical audience by that rustic, piping music, quavering and thin as the noise of an insect, buzzing away in a corner! I saw the actors, always delighted professionally by the failure of a comrade, slyly and ironically curl their clean-shaven lips; the fireman, under his gas-jet, writhed with silent laughter; even the prompter, aroused from his usual somnolence by the singularity of the episode, raised himself by his hands, and stuck his head out of his box, so that he looked like a gigantic turtle. Meanwhile Buisson, having finished playing, reverted to his phrase, which he apparently considered pretty.

"What! the good Lord's bird sings like that, and you can't do with three holes what he does with just one?"

"What's this fellow of yours saying with his chatter about holes?" said Hostein.

Thereupon I tried to explain the significance of the matter, the importance of having three holes instead of five, the originality of the idea of one person playing two instruments. "I must say," observed Marie Laurent, "that it would be more convenient with two."

To support my argument I tried to give an idea of the *farandole* step on the stage. No one paid

any attention to it, and I began to realize vaguely the cruel truth that, in order that others might share the impressions, the poetic memories, which the drum and its simple old airs aroused in me, it was essential that the musician should bring with him to Paris a hill-top, a patch of blue sky, a bit of Provençal atmosphere. — "Come, children, let's go on, let's go on!" — And, with no further heed to the drummer, the rehearsal proceeded. Buisson did not stir, but remained at his post, assured of his triumph, honestly believing that he was already a part of the play. After the first act I felt a pang of remorse at leaving him on his cask at the rear of the stage, where his figure could be indistinctly seen.

"Come, Buisson, down with you at once!"

"Are we going to sign the contract?"

The poor devil believed that he had produced a tremendous effect, and he showed me a stamped paper prepared beforehand with the characteristic foresight of a peasant.

"No, not to-day; he will write to you. But take care, *sapristi!* your drum knocks against everything and makes a great racket!"

I was ashamed of the drum now: I feared that somebody would hear it; and what joy, what a sense of relief I felt when I had stowed him away in the cab once more! I dared not go to the theatre again for a week.

Some time after, Buisson came to see me again.

"Well, what about that contract?"

"Contract? Oh, yes! that contract. Well, Hostein is hesitating; he does n't understand."

"He's a fool!"

From the harsh and bitter tone in which the sweet-tempered musician uttered those words, I realized the full extent of my crime. Intoxicated by my enthusiasm, my praise, the Provençal drummer had lost his head, gone daft; he took himself for a great man in all seriousness, and was confident — had I not told him so, alas! — that great triumphs were in store for him in Paris. Just try, I pray you, to stop a drum when it is rolling thus, with a great noise, among the rocks and bramble bushes, on the downward slope of illusion! I did not try; it would have been mere folly and a waste of time.

Moreover Buisson now had other and more illustrious admirers: Félicien David and Théophile Gautier, to whom Mistral had written when he wrote to me. Poetic, dreamy souls, easily charmed, quick to forget their surroundings, the author of travels in the Orient and the musician of the land of roses had had no difficulty in imagining a landscape in harmony with the rustic melodies of the drum.

The first, while the flute mimicked the nightingale, fancied that he saw once more the shores of his native Durance and the crumbling terraces of his hills of Cadenet; the other let his dreams wander farther away, and found in the dull, monotonous beating of the drum some delicious reminiscence of nights on the Golden Horn and the Arabian *derboukas*.

Both conceived a sudden and ardent fancy for Buisson's real talent, out of its element though it

was. For a fortnight the newspapers were full of extravagant articles; they all had something to say of the drummer, the illustrated journals published his picture, in a majestic pose, his eye flashing with triumph, the light flute between his fingers, the drum slung over his shoulder. Buisson, drunk with glory, bought newspapers by the dozens and sent them to his province.

From time to time he came to see me and told me of his triumphs: a punch at an artist's studio, evening parties in society, in Faubourg Saint-Germain — his mouth was full of his *Faubourg de Sẽint-Germẽin* — where the rascal made beplumed dowagers dreamy and pensive by repeating shamelessly his famous sentiment: "It came to me one night under an olive-tree, as I listened to a nightingale."

Meanwhile, as it was important that he should not grow rusty, but should preserve, despite the innumerable distractions of artistic life, his mellowness of touch and purity of phrasing, our ingenuous Provençal conceived the plan of rehearsing his serenades and *farandoles* late at night, in the heart of Paris, in his room on the fifth floor of the furnished lodging-house in the Bréda Quarter. *Tu-tu! Pan-pan!* The whole quarter was stirred to its depths by those unusual noises. The neighbors rebelled, they entered a complaint; but Buisson continued with renewed vigor, spreading harmony and insomnia abroad with a turn of his hand, until the *concierge*, at the end of his forbearance, refused him his key one night.

Buisson, robing himself in his artistic dignity, sued for his rights before the justice of the peace, and won. The French law, which is very harsh to musicians and banishes hunting-horns to the cellars throughout the year, allowing them only on Mardi Gras, — one day out of three hundred and sixty-five to blow their coppery blasts in the free air, — the French law, it seems, had not foreseen the drum.

After that victory, Buisson was daunted by nothing. One Sunday morning I received a card: he proposed to display his talents, that afternoon, in a grand concert at the Salle du Châtelet. Duty and friendship called: I went to hear him, therefore, not without a feeling of depression due to a secret presentiment.

It was a superb audience, the hall filled from pit to arched ceiling; evidently our newspaper articles had told. Suddenly the curtain rose: general agitation, profound silence. I uttered a cry of horror. In the centre of the vast stage, so vast that six hundred ballet-dancers can perform freely upon it, Buisson, with his drum, arrayed in a coat that was too small for him, and gloves that made him resemble the insects with yellow claws whom Granville, in his fanciful sketches, represents puffing desperately at fantastic instruments, — Buisson made his appearance alone. I saw him, with my opera-glass, waving his long arms and moving his shoulders up and down; the poor devil was evidently playing, beating his drum vigorously and blowing with all the strength of his lungs; but no

perceptible sound reached the audience. It was too far, everything was swallowed by the stage. It was like a cricket singing his serenade in the middle of the Champ de Mars! And it was impossible for any one to count the holes at that distance, or for him to say, "It came to me," or to talk about the good Lord's bird!

I was red with shame; I saw bewildered faces all about me, I heard voices muttering: "What's the meaning of this wretched joke?" The doors of the boxes began to slam, the hall gradually became empty; however, as it was a well-bred audience, there was no hissing, but they left the drummer to finish his tune in solitude.

I waited for him at the stage door to console him. Console, indeed! He thought he had made a tremendous hit; he was more radiant than ever. "I'm waiting for Colonne to sign this," he said, showing me a bulky document spotted with stamps. That was too much, upon my word; I could not contain myself; I took my courage in both hands and told him bluntly, without stopping for breath, just what I thought: —

"Buisson, we have all made a mistake in trying to make Paris understand the charm of your great drum and the melody of your fife. I made a mistake; Gautier and David made a mistake; and the result is that you are making a mistake. No, you're no nightingale."

"It came to me —" interposed Buisson.

"Yes, it came to you, I know; but you're no nightingale. The nightingale sings everywhere,

his song is of all countries, and in all countries his song is understood. But you are only a poor cricket, — whose monotonous, shrill refrain is well suited to the pale olive-trees, the pines weeping pitch in golden tears, the deep blue sky, the bright sunlight, the stony hills of Provence, — but an absurd, pitiful cricket under this gray sky, in the wind and rain, with your long wings dripping wet. So go back to Provence, take back your drum, play your serenades, play for the pretty girls to dance the *farandole*, for the triumphal march of the conquerors in the bull-fights. There, you are a poet, an artist; here, you will always be an unappreciated mountebank."

He made no reply; but in his visionary glance, in his mild but stubborn eye, I could read: "The trouble with you is that you 're jealous!"

A few days later, my man came to me, as proud as Artaban, to inform me that Colonne — another imbecile, like Hostein — had refused to sign a contract; but that another opportunity had presented itself, a marvellous opportunity: an engagement at a café-concert, at 120 francs per evening, signed in advance. He actually had the paper. Ah! a precious paper, truly! I learned the truth afterward.

Some ill-fated manager or other, borne onward, blinded by the muddy current of bankruptcy, had conceived the idea of clinging to that brittle willow-branch, Buisson's drum and fife. Being sure that he could not pay, he signed whatever he was asked to sign. But the Provençal did not look so

far ahead; he had a stamped paper, and that stamped paper was enough to gladden his heart. Moreover, as it was a café-concert, he must have a costume. "They have dressed me as a troubadour of ancient times," he said with a condescending smile, "but as I have a very good figure, it does n't look badly on me, as you 'll see!" I did see, in very truth.

In one of the cafés-chantants in the neighborhood of Porte Saint-Denis, so fashionable in the latter years of the Empire, with the tawdry tinsel of its strange half-Chinese, half-Persian decorations, the daubs and streaks of gold being made more offensive to the eye by the gas-jets and chandeliers; its proscenium boxes, locked and barred, where duchesses and ambassadresses concealed themselves on certain evenings, to applaud the contortions and vocal gymnastics of some eccentric diva; its sea of heads and of beer-glasses, levelled, like the waves on a foggy day, by pipe-smoke and the vapor of many breaths; its waiters running to and fro; its customers calling; its orchestral conductor, in his white cravat, dignified and impassive, arousing or allaying with a gesture *à la Neptune* the hurricane of fifty brass instruments; — between an idiotically sentimental ballad, bleated by a very pretty girl with eyes like a sheep, and a pastoral ditty, cynically roared by a sort of red-armed Theresa, on the stage where some half-dozen damsels in white, very *décolletées*, sat around in a circle awaiting their turn to sing and ogling the audience, there suddenly appeared a person-

age whom I shall never forget while I live. It was Buisson, with his flute at his mouth, his drum on his left knee, in troubadour costume as he had promised me. But such a troubadour! a doublet (imagine that!) half apple-green and half blue, one leg of his breeches red, the other yellow, and everything so skin-tight that it made one shudder; cap with slashed edges, high-heeled shoes with peaked toes, and with all the rest, moustaches, those superb moustaches, too long and too black, which he could not make up his mind to sacrifice, falling around his chin like a cascade of shoe-blacking!

Fascinated presumably by the exquisite taste displayed in that costume, the audience greeted the musician with a long murmur of approval, and my troubadour smiled affably and was happy, seeing that sympathetic audience before him, and feeling on his back the flaming glances of the lovely ladies seated in a circle and admiring him. Ah! but it was another matter when the music began. The *tu-tus*, the *pan-pans*, could not charm those ears, surfeited as a palate is by alcohol, and burned by the vitriol of the repertory of the resort. And then the company was not, as at the Châtelet, a reserved and distinguished one. — "Enough! enough! Take him away! Have n't you finished, learned pig?" — In vain did Buisson try to open his mouth and say: "It came to me —" the benches rose in their wrath, the curtain had to be lowered, and the green, blue, red, and yellow troubadour disappeared in the tempest of hisses, like

a poor macaw stripped of its feathers and whirled away by a gust of wind in the tropics.

Would you believe it? Buisson persisted! An illusion strikes deep and is hard to uproot in a Provençal brain. Fifteen evenings in succession he appeared, always hissed, never paid, until the moment when a bailiff's clerk affixed a certificate of bankruptcy on the openwork doors of the café-concert.

Thereupon the downward course began. From music-hall to music-hall, from brothel to brothel, still believing in his success, still pursuing his chimera of an engagement on stamped paper, the drummer descended to suburban gin-shops — where gambling is carried on in secret — accompanied by a keyless piano for orchestra, to the keenest delight of an audience of tired, tipsy boatmen and dry-goods clerks spending Sunday in the country.

One evening — winter was barely at an end, and spring had not arrived — I was crossing the Champs-Élysées. An open-air concert, being in a greater hurry than others, had suspended its lanterns from the still leafless trees. It was drizzling a little and was dismal enough. I heard a *Tu-tu! Pan-pan!* Buisson again! I saw him through the entrance, drumming a Provençal air before half-a-dozen auditors, sitting under umbrellas, who had entered on complimentary tickets, I doubt not. I dared not go in: after all, it was my fault! It was the fault of my imprudent enthusiasm. Poor Buisson! poor bedraggled cricket!

VII.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — TARTARIN OF TARASCON.

NEARLY fifteen years have passed since I published the *Adventures of Tartarin*, and Tarascon has not yet forgiven me; indeed, travellers worthy of credence inform me that, every morning, at the time when the little Provençal town opens the shutters of its shops and shakes its carpets in the breath of the great Rhone, from every doorway, from every window, there is the same angry shaking of fists, the same flashing of black eyes, the same cry of rage Parisward. "Oh! that Daudet — if he ever comes down here just once!" — as in the story of Bluebeard: "Come down, or I will come up!"

And, joking aside, once Tarascon did come up.

It was in 1878, when the provinces were much in evidence, — in the hotels, on the boulevards, and on the gigantic bridge thrown across the river from the Champ de Mars to the Trocadéro. One morning the sculptor Amy, a native of Tarascon naturalized in Paris, was called upon by a formidable pair of moustaches which had come to Paris by excursion train, ostensibly to see the Universal Exposition, but really to have an explanation with

Daudet on the subject of the gallant commandant Bravida and the *Defence of Tarascon*, a little tale published during the war.

"*Que?* — we 're going to Daudet's!"

Those were the first words spoken by the Tarasconian moustaches on entering the studio; and for a fortnight the sculptor Amy heard nothing but the question: "And, by the way, where can we find that Daudet?" The unfortunate artist exhausted his imagination to spare me that heroi-comic visitation. He took his countryman's moustaches to the Exposition, lost them on the Street of the Nations, in the machinery gallery, watered them with English beer, Hungarian wine, mare's milk, divers outlandish drinks, bewildered them with Moorish music, gypsy music, Japanese music, fatigued them, wore them out, hoisted them — like Tartarin on his minaret — to the towers of the Trocadéro.

But the Provençal's rancor held firm, and as he surveyed Paris from the summit he asked with a frown: —

"Can we see his house from here?"

"Whose house?"

"Why, that Daudet's, *pardi!*"

And it was like that everywhere. Luckily the excursion train got steam up and bore away the Tarasconian's vengeance unwreaked; but when he had gone others might come, and while the Exposition lasted I did not sleep. It is something, I tell you, to feel the hatred of a whole town on your shoulders! Even to this day, when I travel

in the South, I am always ill at ease when I pass through Tarascon. I know that it still bears me a grudge, that my books are banished from its libraries, cannot be found even at the railway station; and from the farthest point at which I can descry the castle of good King Réné from the railway carriage, I am uncomfortable and would like to rush through the station. That is why I avail myself of this new edition to offer to the people of Tarascon, with my most profuse apologies, the explanation which the ex-commander-in-chief of their militia came to demand at my hands.

Tarascon was, so far as I am concerned, simply a pseudonym picked up on the line from Paris to Marseille, because it had a sonorous sound in the Southern accent, and rang out triumphantly, among the names of stations, like the yell of an Apache warrior. In reality, the country of Tartarin and the *helmet-hunters* is a little farther on, some five or six leagues, "on the other hand" of the Rhone. There it was that I, as a child, saw the baobab languishing in the little mignonette pot, the image of my hero in the narrow confines of his little town, where the Rebuffas sang the duet from *Robert le Diable;* and it was from there that Tartarin and I, armed to the teeth and with Algerian sharpshooters' caps on our heads, set out one day in November, 1861, to hunt the lion in Algeria.

To tell the truth, I did not go solely for that purpose, being especially desirous to patch up my somewhat dilapidated lungs in the warm

sunshine. But not for nothing, bless my soul! was I born in the country of the *helmet-hunters;* and as soon as I set my foot on the deck of the *Zouave*, upon which our enormous arm-chest was embarked, more Tartarin than Tartarin, I really fancied that I was going to exterminate all the wild beasts in the Atlas Mountains.

O the enchantment of one's first journey! It seems to me as if it were but yesterday that we set sail on that blue sea, blue as a liquid dye, its surface ruffled by the wind, sparkling with grains of salt, while the bowsprit reared and plunged, pricked the waves, then shook itself all white with foam, and rushed on, pointing seaward, always seaward; and all the bells in Marseille striking the noon hour, and my twenty years ringing a resonant peal in my brain.

I see it all again, simply from speaking of it: I am in Algiers, strolling through the bazaars in a half-light that smells of musk and amber, pressed rose-leaves, and warm wool; the *guzlas* give forth their nasal notes on three strings before the little Tunisian wardrobes with mirrors for panels and mother-of-pearl arabesques, while the fountain drips with cool, refreshing note on the porcelain tiles of the *patio.* And here am I snatching a glimpse at Sahel, the orange woods of Blidah, Chiffa, the brook of the Monkeys, Milianah and its green slopes, its orchards of tangled helianthus, fig-trees, and gourd-trees, like our Provençal country-houses.

Here is the immense valley of the Chelif, thickets

of lentils, dwarf palms, dry beds of torrents lined with rose-laurels; on the horizon the smoke of a *gourbi* rising straight in the air from a clump of cactus, the gray-walled enclosure of a caravansary, a saint's tomb with its white turban-like cupola, its *ex-votos* on the dazzlingly white wall, and here and there, in the glaring, parched expanse, moving dark specks which are flocks and herds.

And I still hear, with the sensation in the pit of my stomach caused by the jolting of my Arab saddle, the clashing of my great stirrups, the cries of the shepherds in that wavy, pure atmosphere where the voice leaps from wave to wave: "Si Mohame-e-ed-i — ;" the fierce barking of watch-dogs around the villages, the shooting and shouting of the horse-races, and the wild music of the *derboukas*, at night, in front of the open tents, while the jackals yelp in the fields as persistently as our crickets, and a crescent moon, Mahomet's crescent, casts its gleam over the starry velvet of the night. Very distinct in my memory too is the melancholy of the home-coming, the sensation of exile and cold on landing at Marseille, and the dark, veiled aspect of the blue sky of Provence compared with those Algerian landscapes, that palette with its vivid and varied scale of coloring, dawns of an indescribable green, mineral green, the green of poison, short evening twilights with changing shades of purple and amethyst, pink wells to which pink camels come to drink, where the well-cord, and the Bedouin's beard, lapping the very bucket, stream with pink drops; — after the

lapse of twenty years, I am still conscious of that regret, that homesick longing for a light that has disappeared.

There is in Mistral's language a word which defines and summarizes an instinct of the race: *galéja*, to make sport of, to jest. And one can see the flash of irony, the mischievous gleam in the depths of Provençal eyes. *Galéja* recurs on all occasions in conversation, under the form of a verb or a substantive. — "*Vesés-pas? Es uno galéjado.* — Don't you see? It 's a joke." — "*Taisote, galéjaïré.* — Hold your tongue, you wretched scoffer." — But the being a *galéjaïré* does not exclude either kindness of heart or affectionate disposition. They are simply amusing themselves, *té!* they say it laughingly; and down yonder laughter goes with all sentiments, the most impassioned, the most tender. In an old, old ballad of our province — the story of little Fleurance — this liking of the Provençaux for laughter appears in an exquisite guise. Fleurance has married, when a mere child, a knight who takes her so young — *la prén tan jouveneto se saup pas courdela* — that she does not know how to clasp her belt. But they are no sooner married than Fleurance's lord and master is obliged to start for Palestine and leave his little wife all alone. Seven years have passed, and the knight has given no sign of life, when a pilgrim with a shell in his hat and a long beard appears at the drawbridge of the castle. He has just returned from among the *Teurs;* he brings news from Fleurance's husband;

and the young lady at once orders that he be admitted, places him opposite her at table.

What takes place between them thereafter I can tell you in two ways; for the story of Fleurance, like all popular ballads, has made the tour of France in the pedler's pack, and I found it in Picardie with a significant variation. In the Picard ballad, the lady begins to weep in the midst of the repast.

"You weep, lovely Fleurance?" queries the pilgrim, trembling with emotion.

"I weep, because I recognize you and you are my dear husband."

The little Provençal Fleurance, on the contrary, has hardly taken her seat opposite the long-bearded pilgrim when she begins prettily *to laugh at him.* "*Hé!* why do you laugh, Fleurance?" —"*Té!* I laugh because you are my husband."

And, still laughing, she jumps upon his knees, and the pilgrim laughs too in his wig of tow, for he, like her, is a *galéjaïré*, which fact does not interfere with their loving each other dearly, in close embrace, lip to lip, with all the emotion of their faithful hearts.

And I, too, am a *galéjaïré.* In the mists of Paris, in the splashing of its mud and its melancholy, I may perhaps have lost the taste and faculty for laughter; but on reading Tartarin you will see that there still remained, in the depths of my being, a trace of gayety which suddenly developed in the genial light of the South.

Most assuredly I agree that there was room for

something more to be written concerning French Algeria than the *Adventures of Tartarin;* for example, a true and pitiless study of its manners and morals, the results of close observation of a new country on the borderland between two races and two civilizations, with their reciprocal action upon each other, the victor vanquished in his turn by the climate, by the enervating mode of life, by Oriental carelessness and rottenness, clubbing and marauding, the Algerian Doineau [1] and the Algerian Bazaine, those two perfect products of the Arab administration. What revelations might be made concerning the vileness of those barrack-room morals, the story of a colonist, the founding of a town amid the rivalries of three powers face to face, — the army, the magistracy, and the government! Instead of all that, I brought back naught save *Tartarin*, a burst of laughter, a *galéjade.*

To be sure, my companion and I looked a fine pair of fools, as we disembarked in red belts and glaring sharpshooters' caps in the good city of Algiers, where there were hardly any Turks except our two selves. With what a meditative, satisfied air did Tartarin remove his enormous hunting-boots at the doors of the mosques and enter the sanctuary of Mahomet, with grave face and tightly

[1] Auguste Édouard Doineau, a French officer in Algiers, was in 1852 appointed head of a bureau there. He was sentenced to death for murdering a prominent Arab official and his interpreter. His sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, and in 1859 Napoléon pardoned him on condition that he should never return to France or Algiers. He was afterwards more or less in the public eye for various unsavory reasons.

closed lips, in colored socks! Ah! that fellow believed in the Orient, the Indian dancing-girls, the muezzins, the lions, the panthers, the dromedaries, — everything that his books had chosen to tell him; and his Southern imagination magnified them all.

I, as faithful as the camel in my tale, followed him through his heroic dream; but at times I was a little doubtful. I remember that one evening, at Oued-Fodda, as we started out to lie in wait for a lion, and passed through an encampment of *Chasseurs d'Afrique* with our whole outfit of leggings, rifles, revolvers, and hunting-knives, I felt keenly the absurdity of the situation as I remarked the silent stupefaction of the honest troopers eating their soup in front of the lines of tents. "Suppose there should n't be any lion!"

And yet, that sensation to the contrary notwithstanding, an hour later, after nightfall, when I was on my knees in a clump of laurel, searching the darkness with my glasses, while cranes flew screaming far overhead, and jackals crept through the grass around me, I felt my rifle tremble on the hilt of the hunting-knife which was stuck in the ground.

I have attributed to Tartarin that shudder of fear and the burlesque reflections which accompanied it; but that is a great injustice. I give you my word that, if the lion had appeared, honest Tartarin would have received him, rifle at rest, and knife in the air; and if his bullet had missed its mark, if his knife had betrayed him in a hand-to-

hand struggle, he would have ended the conflict body to body, would have suffocated the monster in his more than muscular arms, torn him with his nails and teeth, without turning a hair; for he was a rough fighter, was that *helmet-hunter*, and furthermore a man of spirit, who was the first to laugh at my *galéjade!*

The history of Tartarin was not written until long after my trip to Algeria. The trip was in 1861–2, the book was written in 1869. I began to publish it as a serial in the *Petit Moniteur Universel*, with amusing sketches by Émile Benassit. It was an absolute failure. The *Petit Moniteur* was a popular newspaper, and the common people have no comprehension of printed sarcasm, which bewilders them, makes them think that you mean to make sport of them. Words fail to describe the disappointment of the subscribers to the one-sou journal, who relish so keenly *Rocambole* and Ponson du Terrail, when they read those first chapters of the life of Tartarin, the ballads and the baobab, — a disappointment which went as far as threats of stopping their subscriptions, and personal insults. Some one wrote to me: "Ah! indeed — and what then? What does that prove? Imbecile!" — and fiercely signed his name. Paul Dalloz was most to be pitied, for he had incurred considerable expense in advertising and illustrations, and he paid dear for an experiment. After some ten or twelve instalments, I took pity on him and carried *Tartarin* to *Figaro*, where it was better understood by

the readers, but came in collision with other animosities. The secretary of the editorial staff of *Figaro* at that time was Alexandre Duvernois, brother of Clement Duvernois, former journalist and minister. As ill-luck would have it, nine years before, during my playful Algerian expedition, I had met Alexandre Duvernois, then a modest clerk in the civil service at Milianah, who had always retained a feeling of genuine adoration for the colony. Irritated and disgusted by the light tone in which I spoke of his dear Algeria, although he could not prevent the publication of *Tartarin*, he arranged to divide it up into intermittent fragments, alleging the nauseating, stereotyped excuse of "abundance of matter," so that that poor little novel dragged its slow length along in the newspaper almost as interminably as the *Wandering Jew* or the *Three Musketeers*. "It drags, it drags," rumbled Villemessant's double-bass, and I was terribly afraid that I should be obliged to break off a second time.

Then there were fresh tribulations. The hero of my book was at that time called Barbarin of Tarascon.

Now there was at Tarascon an old family of Barbarins, who threatened me with a lawsuit if I did not instantly remove their name from that insulting buffoonery. Having a holy dread of courts and the law, I consented to substitute Tartarin for Barbarin in the proofs already struck off, which had to be gone over line by line in a careful hunt for *B's*. Some must have escaped in

those three hundred pages; and in the first edition there are Barbarins and Tartarins, and even *tonsoir* for *bonsoir*. At last the book appeared, and succeeded very well from the publisher's standpoint, despite the very local flavor which every one does not enjoy. One must be from the South, or know it very well, to realize how common the Tartarin type is among us, and that under the hot Tarascon sun, which warms and magnetizes them, the absurd fancies of men's brains and imaginations are developed into monstrosities as diverse in form and dimensions as the gourds.

Judged impartially, at a distance of some years, Tartarin, running his wild, unbridled course, seems to me to possess the qualities of youth and life and truth, — the truth of the country beyond the Loire, which inflates and exaggerates, never lies, and *tarasconises* all the time. The grain of the work is neither very fine nor of very close texture. It is what I call "standing literature," spoken and gesticulated with my hero's exuberant enthusiasm. But I must confess that, great as is my love of style, of beautiful prose, melodious and highly colored, in my opinion these should not be the novelist's only care. His real delight should consist in the creation of real persons, in establishing, by virtue of their verisimilitude, types of men and women who will go about thenceforth through the world with the names, the gestures, the grimaces, with which he has endowed them and which make people speak of them — whether they be loved or detested — without reference to their

his name. For
the same, when I
he has met in his
nerable puppets of
a Tartarin — a Mon-
ech times a thrill runs
that a father feels,
his son is being ap-
ne longing to cry out:

VIII.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — LETTERS FROM MY MILL.

ON the right-hand side of the road from Arles to the quarries of Fontvielle, beyond the hill of Corde and Montmajour Abbey, and above a large village, as white and dusty as a stoneyard, rises a little mountain covered with pines, always green amid the parched, brown landscape. The wings of the windmill turn in the wind on the summit; at the foot stands a great white house, the manor of Montauban, an ancient and unique structure which begins as a château — broad stoop, Italian terrace with pillars — and ends with the whitewashed walls of a Provençal farm, with perches for the peacocks, a vine over the door, the well with its ironwork entwined by the branches of a figtree, sheds in which harrows and ploughshares gleam, the enclosure for the sheep, and beyond it a field of slender almond trees with bunches of pink flowers quickly scattered in the March wind. Those are the only flowers at Montauban. There are no flower-beds, no greensward, nothing to remind one of a garden, an enclosed estate; nothing but clumps of pines among the gray rocks, a natural, wild park, with paths through the underbrush, slippery with dry pine-needles. Within, there is

the same contrast of manor and farm-house; — cool, flagged galleries, furnished with Louis Quatorze couches and easy-chairs, with cane seats and twisted legs, so convenient for siestas in summer; broad staircases, echoing halls where the wind blows at will, whistles under the chamber doors and waves the old-fashioned broad striped curtains. Descend two steps and lo! you are in the rustic living-room, with no floor save the hard-trodden earth, low in the centre, where the hens scratch for the crumbs from the farm breakfast, and with rough-cast walls against which stand walnut side-boards and the roughly made basket and kneading trough.

An old Provençal family lived there twenty years ago, a family no less unique and charming than its dwelling-place. The mother, a country bourgeoise of advanced age, but still perfectly straight in her widow's cap, which she had never laid aside, was the sole manager of that estate, which was of considerable extent and included olive and mulberry plantations, wheat fields and vineyards; her four sons lived with her, four old fellows who were commonly designated by the professions which they severally had practised or were still practising: the Mayor, the Consul, the Notary, the Advocate. Their father being dead and their sister married, they had all four gathered around the old woman, sacrificing their ambitions and their tastes to her, united in a single-hearted love for her whom they called their "dear mamma," with an inflection indicating profound respect and emotion.

Excellent people, blessed house! How often in winter have I gone thither to recuperate in the arms of nature, to cure myself of Paris and its fevers in the healthful emanations of our little Provençal hills. I would appear unheralded, sure of a welcome, my arrival announced by the bugle-call of the peacocks and hunting dogs, Miracle, Miraclet, Tambour, which gambolled around the carriage, while the startled maid-servant's Arlesian head-dress fluttered in the wind as she ran to inform her masters, and "dear mamma" pressed me to her little gray plaid shawl, as if I were one of her own boys. Five minutes of confusion, and then, when the greetings were at an end and my trunk in my room, the whole house became silent and calm once more. I would whistle to old Miracle — a spaniel found on a piece of wreckage at sea by fishermen from Faraman — and I would go up to my mill.

The mill was a ruin; a crumbling mass of stone, iron and old boards which had not turned in the wind for many years and which lay, with broken limbs, as useless as a poet, while all around on the hillside the miller's trade prospered and ground with all its wings. Strange affinities exist between ourselves and inanimate things. From the first day that cast-off structure was dear to my heart; I loved it for its desolation, its road overgrown with weeds, those little grayish, fragrant mountain weeds with which Père Gaucher compounded his elixir; for its little worn platform where it was so pleasant to loiter, sheltered from the wind, while a rabbit hur-

ried by, or a long snake, rustling among the leaves with crafty detours, hunted the field mice with which the ruin swarmed. With the creaking of an old building shaken by the north wind, the flapping of its ragged wings like the rigging of a ship at sea, the mill stirred in my poor, restless, nomadic brain memories of journeys by sea, of landings at light-houses and far-off islands; and the shivering swell all about completed the illusion. I know not whence I derived this taste for wild and desert places which has characterized me from my child-hood, and which seems so inconsistent with the exuberance of my nature, unless it be at the same time the physical need of repairing by a fast of words, by abstinence from outcries and gestures, the terrible waste which the Southerner makes of his whole being. Be that as it may, I owe a great deal to those places of refuge for the mind; and no one of them has been more salutary in its effect upon me than that old mill in Provence. Indeed, I was tempted for a moment to purchase it; and at the office of the notary at Fontvielle may be seen a deed which never went beyond the stage of being drawn, but which I made use of in the preface to my book.

My mill never belonged to me. But that fact did not prevent my passing there long days filled with dreams and memories, until the hour when the winter sun sank between the low, bare hills, filling the valleys as with molten metal, with a smoking stream of gold. Then, at a blast upon a sea-shell, the horn with which M. Séguin called

his goat, I returned to partake of the evening meal at the hospitable and unconventional table at Montauban, where every one was served according to his tastes and habits; the Consul's Constance wine beside the water gruel or plate of white chestnuts of which the old mother made her frugal dinner. Having taken our coffee and lighted our pipes, and the four boys having gone down to the village, I remained behind to talk with the excellent woman, an energetic, kindly character, a keen intellect, a memory full of anecdotes which she told with such simple eloquence: incidents of her childhood, people who had disappeared, vanished customs, the gathering of vermilion from the leaves of the kermes-oaks,[1] 1815, the invasion, the heartfelt cry of relief of all mothers at the fall of the First Empire, the dances, the fireworks discharged on all the public squares, and the handsome Cossack officer in a green coat, with whom she had gambolled like a kid, had danced the *farandole* one whole night on the bridge of Beaucaire. And then her marriage, the death of her husband and her oldest daughter, whom, when she was several leagues away, a presentiment, a sudden pulsation of the heart used to reveal to her; and other deaths, and births, and the translation of beloved ashes when the old cemetery was closed. It was as if I were turning over the leaves of one of those old account-books, with worn edges, wherein the moral history of families

[1] The *kermes* insect, allied to the cochineal insect, and found on several species of oak near the Mediterranean, has long been used in dyeing.

used to be written down, mingled with the trivial details of everyday life, and accounts of good crops of wine and oil side by side with miracles of sacrifice and reisgnation. In that half-rustic bourgeoise housewife I was conscious of a thoroughly feminine, refined, intuitive mind, the mischievous and innocent fascination of a little girl. When she was tired of talking, she would bury herself in her great easy-chair, at a distance from the lamp; the shadow of the falling night would close her hollow eyelids, creep over her aged, deep-lined face, wrinkled, furrowed with crevasses and ravines by the ploughshare and the harrow; and as she sat there mute and motionless, I might have believed that she was dead but for the rattling of her rosary as her fingers told the beads in the depths of her pocket. Thereupon I would steal softly from the room to finish my evening in the kitchen.

Beneath the overhang of a gigantic fireplace where the copper lamp was hung, a numerous company would have assembled in front of a bright fire of olive-tree stumps, its intermittent flashes casting a curious light upon the pointed caps and jackets of yellow *caddis*. In the place of honor, on the hearthstone, sat the shepherd in a crouching attitude, with his closely shaven chin, his skin like tanned leather, and his *cachimbau* (short pipe) in the corner of his finely-cut mouth; he spoke but little, having acquired the habit of contemplative silence in the long summer months when he kept his flocks on the mountains of Dauphiné, beneath the stars, all of which he knew by name, from *Jen*

de Milan to the *Char des Âmes.* Between two whiffs of his pipe he would utter in his sonorous patois fragmentary sentences, incomplete parables, mysterious proverbs, a few of which I remember.

"The ballad of Paris, the most pitiful thing on earth. — [You can tell] man by his speech and the ox by his horns. — A monkey's job, mean and hard. — Pale moon, 't will rain soon. — With a red moon, you know, the wind will blow. — When the moon is white, the day will be bright." — And every evening the same quotation, with which he closed the session: "The older she grew, the more she knew, and so did n't want to die."

Next him was the keeper Mitifio, called Pistolet, with the merry eyes and the little white spaniel, who entertained the company with a multitude of tales and legends which his mocking, mischievous, thoroughly Provençal wit made ever new. Sometimes, amid the laughter aroused by one of Pistolet's anecdotes, the shepherd would remark with the utmost gravity: "If to have a white beard entitles one to be considered wise, goats ought to be." — There was old Siblet too, Dominique the coachman, and a little hunchback nicknamed *lou Roudéirou* (*Le Rôdeur*),[1] a sort of hobgoblin, a village spy, with keen eyes that could pierce the darkness and stone walls, a quick-tempered creature, consumed by religious and political animosities.

You should have heard him describe and imitate old Jean Coste, a Red of '93, recently dead and

[1] The Prowler.

loyal to his beliefs to the end. There was Jean Coste's journey, twenty leagues on foot, to see the curé and the two *secondaries* (vicars) of his village guillotined. — "I tell you, my children, when I saw them stick their heads through the little window — and they didn't like to put their heads through the little window — but God bless me! I enjoyed it all the same (*taben aguéré dé plesi*)." And Jean Coste, shivering with cold, warming his old carcass against some wall in the blazing sun. and saying to the boys about him: "Young men, have you read Volney? — *Jouven auès legi Voulney?* — He proves mathematically that there 's no God but the sun! — *Gès dé Diou, doum dé Liou! rèn qué lou souleù!*" — And his opinions concerning the men of the Revolution: "Marat, good man; Saint-Just, good man; Danton, also a good man. But, toward the end, he ruined himself, he fell into the snare of moderatism — *dins lou mouderantismo!*" — And Jean Coste's death-agony when he sat up like a spectre in his bed and spoke French for once in his life, to roar in the priest's face: "Out with you, crow — the carrion is n't dead yet!" — The little hunchback would utter that last outcry in such a tone that the women would exclaim: "Ah! holy mother!" and the sleeping dogs would wake and plunge growling at the door where the night wind wailed through the cracks, until a shrill, fresh female voice would strike up, to do away with the painful impression, one of Saboli's Christmas chants: "I saw in the air — an angel clothed in green — who wore great wings —

above his shoulders." Or the arrival of the Magi at Bethlehem: "Behold the Moorish king — with his eyes all red with weeping — the Child Jesus weeps — the king dares not enter;" — a simple, lively air for the flute, which I noted down with all the local metaphors, expressions and traditions collected among the ashes on that venerable hearth.

Often too, my fancy indulged in little excursions around the mill. I went hunting or fishing in Camargue, in the direction of the pond of Vacarès, among the cattle and wild horses running at will in that region of desolate plains. Another day I would go to visit my friends the Provençal poets, the Félibres.[1] At that time the Félibrige had not become a dignified academical institution. Those were the early days of the *Church*, the fervent, ingenuous hours, without schisms or rivalries. Five or six good fellows, laughing like children in apostles' beards, met by appointment, sometimes at Maillane, in Frédéric Mistral's little village, separated from me by the lace-like heights of the Alpilles; sometimes at Arles, in the forum, amid a swarm of drovers and shepherds come thither to hire themselves out to the farmers. Sometimes we

[1] The movement which resulted in the "Provençal Renaissance" was founded by Roumanille, when, it is not possible to say definitely, but probably between 1840 and 1850. It is said by Larousse to have been due to the fact that his mother was unable to understand some verses which he wrote for her when he left college, because she had forgotten her school French. He thereupon determined to write and to encourage others to write poetry for the common people of Provence in their language. Frédéric Mistral acquired the greatest fame of those who supported him in his undertaking.

went to Aliscamps, to listen, lying in the grass among the sarcophagi of gray stone, to one of Théodore Aubanel's beautiful dramas, while the air vibrated with grasshoppers and the hammers in the machine-shops of the P. L. M. rang out ironically behind a curtain of pale trees. After the reading, a turn on the Lice to see the haughty and coquettish Arlesian girl for love of whom poor Jan killed himself pass by in her white neckerchief and little cap. At other times our rendezvous was at Ville des Baux, that crumbling heap of ruins, of wild cliffs, of ancient escutcheoned palaces, crumbling away, swaying in the wind like an eagle's nest on the height, whence one descries beyond vast plains and plains, a line of deeper, sparkling blue, which is the sea. We would sup at Corneille's inn; and wander all the evening, singing poetry, through narrow jagged lanes, among crumbling walls, remains of stairways, of uncrowned capitals, in a ghostly light which touched the grasses and stones as with a light snow. "Poets, *anén!*" said Master Corneille. "Those who love to look at ruins by moonlight."

The Félibrige still met among the reeds of the island of Barthelasse, opposite the ramparts of Avignon and the papal palace, which witnessed the scheming and adventures of little Vedène. Then, after a breakfast in some sailor's wine-shop, we went up to the poet Anselm Mathieu's at Châteauneuf-des-Papes, famous for its vineyards, which were for a long time the most renowned in Provence. Oh! the wine of the popes, the golden,

royal, imperial, pontifical wine! we drank it there on the shore, singing Mistral's verses the while, new fragments of the *Îles d'Or:* —

"En Arles, au temps des fades — florissait la reine Ponsirade — un rosier;"[1] or the beautiful ballad of the sea: "Le bâtiment vient de Mayorque — avec un chargement d'oranges."[2]

And one could readily fancy oneself at Majorca, looking at that blazing sky, those vine-clad slopes, terraced with walls of loose stones, and the olive-trees, pomegranates and myrtles. Through the open windows flew the rhymes, humming like bees; and we flew behind them, for days and days, through the smiling landscapes of the Comtat, attending elections and brandings, making brief halts in the villages, under the plane-trees of the Cours and the Place and, from the *char-à-bancs* that bore us, distributing orvietan to the assembled populace with much shouting and gesticulation. Our orvietan consisted of Provençal poems, beautiful poems in the language of those peasants who understood and applauded the strophes of *Mirèille*, Aubanel's *Vénus d'Arles*, a legend of Anselm Mathieu or Roumanille, and joined with us in singing the song of the sun: "Grand Soleil de Provence — gai compère du mistral — toi qui siffles la Durance — comme un coup de vin de Crau."[3] The

[1] At Arles, in the days of the *fades*, flourished Queen Ponsirade — a rose bush.

[2] The ship hails from Majorca — with a cargo of oranges.

[3] Bright sunshine of Provence — the minstrel's merry comrade — thou who dost drink the Durance dry — like a draught of Crau wine.

whole celebration would end in an improvised ball, a farandole, boys and girls in their working clothes, and oxen jumping over the little tables; and if any old member of prayers attempted to criticise our unconventional gayety, the handsome Mistral, proud as King David, would say to her from the eminence of his grandeur: "Let be, mother, let be — poets are allowed full liberty." And he would add confidentially, winking at the old woman as she bowed in respectful bewilderment: "Es nautré qué fasen li saumé. We are the ones who wrote the psalms."

And how pleasant it was after one of these lyric escapades to return to the mill, stretch myself out on the grass-grown platform, and think of the book I would write later, describing it all, a book in which I would put the ringing I could still hear in my ears of those songs, that bright laughter, those mystic legends, and a reflection of that pulsing sunshine, the perfume of those parched hills, and which I would date from my ruin with the dead wings.

The first *Letters from my Mill* appeared about 1866 in a Parisian newspaper in which those Provençal chronicles, signed at first with a double pseudonym borrowed from Balzac, "Marie-Gaston," struck a jarring note by their strange flavor. Gaston was my comrade Paul Arène, who, when he was a mere boy, had had a play produced at the Odéon, a little one-act affair sparkling with wit and bright color, and who lived very near me on the outskirts of the forest of Meudon. But although

that finished writer had not yet to his credit *Jean des Figues* nor *Paris Ingénu* nor many other refined and solid pages, he had too much genuine talent, a too real individuality to be long content with that position of miller's assistant. I was left alone therefore to grind my little stories, at the caprice of the wind and the hour, in a terribly agitated life. There were intermissions and breaks; then I married and took my wife to Provence to show her my mill. Nothing had changed, neither the landscape nor the welcome. The old mother pressed us both affectionately against her little plaid shawl, and they made a little place for the new-comer at the boys' table. She sat beside me on the platform of the mill, where the north wind, remarking the presence of this Parisian, a foe to wind and sun, amused himself by buffeting her, by snatching her up and carrying her away in a whirlwind like Chénier's young Tarentine. And it was on our return from that journey that, being taken captive once more by my Provence, I began in *Figaro* a new series of *Letters from my Mill,— The Old People, The Pope's Mule, Pere Gaucher's Elixir,* etc. — written at Champrosay, in Eugène Delacroix's studio, which I have mentioned heretofore in *Jack* and *Robert Helmont.* The volume was published by Hetzel in 1869; two thousand copies were sold with difficulty, awaiting, like my other earlier works, the times when the popularity of the novels should result in increasing their sale and their circulation. Be it so! that is still my favorite book, not from a literary standpoint, but because it reminds me of

the pleasantest hours of my youth, wild laughter, intoxication without remorse, beloved faces and sights which I shall never see again.

To-day Montauban is abandoned. "Dear mamma" is dead, the boys scattered, the wine of Château-neuf exhausted to the juice of the last grape. Where are Miracle and Miraclet, Siblet, Mitifio, the Prowler? If I should go there, I should find no one. But the pines, they tell me, have grown much taller; and over their gleaming green swell, my mill, fitted with new spars and canvas, like a corvette afloat, turns in the sunshine, a poet once more exposed to the breeze of inspiration, a dreamer returned to life.

IX.

MY FIRST PLAY.

OH! how long ago it was! I was far, very far from Paris, in the midst of gayety and light, at the farthest extremity of Algeria, in the valley of the Chélif, one fine day in February, 1862. A plain thirty leagues in extent, bordered on the right hand and the left by a double line of mountains, transparent in the golden mist and purple as amethyst. Lentils, dwarf palms, dry torrents whose stony beds are overgrown with rose laurel; at intervals a caravansery, an Arabian village, or, on the height, a marabout, whitewashed and dazzling, like a great die capped with half an orange; and here and there, in the white expanse of sunlight, moving spots, which are flocks, and which one would take, were not the sky of a deep and immaculate blue, for shadows cast by great clouds passing over. We had hunted all the morning; then, the afternoon heat being too intense, my friend the *bachaga* Boualem had pitched the tent. One of the sides being raised and held up by stakes formed a sort of marquee; the whole horizon entered the tent that way. In front the hobbled horses stood motionless, hanging their heads; the great greyhounds lay curled up in circles fast

asleep; lying on his stomach in the sand, among his little kettles, our coffee-maker prepared the mocha over a small fire of dry twigs, the slender thread of smoke rising straight into the air; and we rolled stout cigarettes without speaking,—Boualem-Ben-Cherifa, his friends Si-Sliman and Sid' Omar, the aga of the Atafs, and myself,—lying at full length on the couches in the shadow of the white tent, to which the sun outside gave a yellowish tinge, outlining on the canvas the symbolic crescent and the print of the bloody hand, compulsory decorations of all Arabian dwellings.

A delicious afternoon which ought never to have come to an end! One of those golden hours which still stand forth after twenty years, as luminous as on the first day, against the grayish background of life. And observe the illogicalness and perversity of our pitiful human nature. To-day I cannot think of that siesta under the tent without regret and homesickness; but candor compels me to confess that at the time I regretted Paris.

Yes, I regretted Paris, which my health, seriously endangered by a literary novitiate of five years, had compelled me to leave abruptly; I regretted Paris because of the beloved objects I had left there, its fogs and its gas-lights, its newspapers, its new books, the discussions, in the evening, at the café or under the porch of the theatres; because of that fine artistic fever, that never-failing enthusiasm, which I saw then only on their sincere sides; I regretted it especially because of my play

— my first play! — which, I was informed on the very day of my departure, had been accepted at the Odéon. Beyond question the landscape upon which I was gazing was beautiful, and its frame had a singularly poetic charm; but I would gladly have exchanged Algiers and the Atlas, Boualem and his friends, the blue of the sky, the white of the marabouts and the pink of the rose-laurels, for the gray colonnade of the Odéon and the little passage-way by which the artists entered, and Constant's office — Constant, the concierge and man of taste — its walls covered with autographs of actors and photographs of actresses in costume. But there I was, suddenly transported into Algeria, leading the life of a *grand seigneur* of the heroic times, when I might have been walking triumphantly, with the hypocritically modest mien of the new author whose play is about to be acted, through those unamiable corridors which had seen me shy and trembling! I was trifling away my time in the society of those Arab chiefs, picturesque doubtless, but unsatisfying in the matter of conversation, when the prompter, the scene-shifters, the stage-manager and the acting-manager, and the whole innumerable tribe of over-painted actresses and blue-chinned actors were intent upon my work! I was inhaling the pungent and refreshing aroma of the orange-trees kissed by the breeze, when it was within my power to regale my nostrils with the close and damp, but peculiarly seductive odor exhaled by the walls of a theatre! And the ceremony of reading the play to the actors, the carafe and

glass of water, the manuscript glistening under the lamp! And the rehearsals, at first in the greenroom around the high fireplace, then on the stage, the mysterious stage with its unfathomable depths, all encumbered with scaffoldings and scenery, facing the empty auditorium, resonant as a cellar and freezing to look upon, with its great chandelier covered with gauze, with its boxes and its proscenium, its stalls covered with gray drugget covers! Later would come the first performance, the façade of the theatre shedding upon the square the cheerful brilliancy of its rows of gas-jets, the carriages arriving, the crowd at the box-office, the anxious waiting in suspense at a café opposite, all alone save for one faithful friend, and the great throb of emotion, striking the heart as if it were a bell, at the moment when black-coated shadows, outlined against the transparent mirror in the greenroom, announce with much animation, that the curtain is falling, and that amid the applause and shouting the author's name has been proclaimed.

"Come!" says the friend, "courage; now we must go and see how it went off, thank the actors and shake hands with the fellows who are waiting impatiently in the private dining-room at Café Tabourey."

Such was the dream I dreamed wide-awake, under the tent, in the benumbing heat of a lovely African winter month, while in the distance, amid the oblique rays of the setting sun, a well — white but a moment before — assumed a pinkish hue, and in the profound silence of the plain no sound

could be heard save the tinkling of a bell and the melancholy calls of the shepherds.

Nor did aught happen to disturb my reverie. My four guests collectively knew perhaps twenty words of French; I, barely ten words of Arabic. My companion, who had been my guide and ordinarily served as my interpreter — a Spanish grain merchant, whose acquaintance I had made at Milianah — was not there, having persisted in prolonging the hunt; so that we smoked our fat cigarettes in silence, sipping black Moorish coffee from microscopic little cups resting in egg-cups of silver filigree.

Suddenly there was a great uproar: the dogs barked, the servants ran hither and thither, and a long-legged devil of a Spahi in a red burnous stopped his horse short in front of the tent: — "Sidi Daoudi?"

It was a despatch from Paris, which had followed my trail from village to village, all the way from Milianah. It contained these simple words: "Play produced yesterday; great success; Rousseil and Tisserant magnificent."

I read and reread that blessed despatch, twenty times, a hundred times, as one reads a love-letter. Think of it! my first play! Seeing my hands tremble with excitement and happiness gleaming in my eyes, the agas surrounded me and talked to one another in Arabic. The most learned resorted to all his learning to say to me: "France — news — family?" Well, no, it was not news from my family that made my heart beat with such a delicious

sensation. And being unable to accustom myself to the idea of having no one to whom to divulge my joy, I took it into my head to explain, to the aga of the Atafs, to Sid' Omar, to Si-Sliman and to Boualem-Ben-Cherifa, with the four words of Arabic which I knew and the twenty words of French which I supposed them to know, what a theatre is, and the importance of a first performance in Paris. An arduous task, as you can imagine! I cudgelled my brains for comparisons, I gesticulated freely, I waved the blue cover of the despatch, exclaiming: *Karaguez! Karaguez!* as if my affecting little play, intended to touch men's hearts and to compel virtuous tears, had any possible connection with the ghastly farces in which the abnormal Turkish Mr. Punch finds his enjoyment; as if one could without blasphemy compare the classic Odéon with the secret dens of the Moorish city, to which the good Mussulmans resort in the evening, despite the prohibition of the police, to enjoy the spectacle of their favorite hero's prurient prowess!

Those were the mirages of the African atmosphere. Disillusionment awaited me in Paris. For I returned to Paris; I returned forthwith, sooner than prudence and the faculty would have had me. But what cared I for the fog and snow toward which I hastened, what cared I for the balmy azure which I left behind? To see my play, that was my sole object in life. Embarked! disembarked! I rushed through Marseille, and behold me on the railway, shivering with excitement. I arrived at Paris about

six o'clock in the afternoon; it was dark. I did not dine. "To the Odéon, driver!" O youth!

The curtain was just about to rise when I took my place in my stall. The theatre had a strange look; it was Mardi-Gras, there would be dancing all night at Bullier, and not a few students of both sexes had come in their masquerade costumes, to while away a couple of hours at the theatre. There were buffoons, Follies, Polichinellos, Pierrettes and Pierrots. "It is hard, very hard," I thought, "to make a Polichinello weep!" But they did weep, they wept so profusely that the spangles on their humps where the light struck them seemed like so many glistening tears. I had on my right a Folly whose emotion kept her cap and bells constantly quivering, and at my left a Pierrette, a buxom tender-hearted wench, comical to see in her emotion, with two great springs gushing from her great eyes and ploughing a double furrow through the flour on her cheeks. Decidedly the despatch had told the truth; my little curtain-raiser was a tremendous success. Meanwhile, I, the author, would have liked to be a hundred feet underground. The play which those good people applauded seemed to me disgraceful, odious. O misery! was that what I had dreamed of, that vulgar creature who had made himself up after the style of Béranger, in order to appear paternal and virtuous? I was unjust, be it understood; Tisserant and Rousseil, both artists of great talent, acted as well as men can act, and to their talent my triumph was due in no small measure. But the disillusionment was too

complete, the difference too great between what I had thought I was writing and what appeared before me now, with all its wrinkles visible, all its holes lighted up by the pitiless glare of the foot-lights; and I really suffered to see that my ideal was stuffed with straw. Despite the emotion of the audience, despite the bravos, I was conscious of a feeling of unspeakable shame and embarrassment. Hot waves, burning flushes, rose to my cheeks. It seemed to me that all that carnival audience must know me and was laughing at me. Perspiring, suffering acutely, losing my head, I repeated the gestures of the actors. I would have liked to make them walk faster, talk faster, rush madly through the dialogue and across the stage so that my torture might be the sooner ended. What a relief when the curtain had fallen, and how quickly I fled, keeping close to the walls, with my collar turned up, as furtive and shamefaced as a thief!

Henri Rochefort.

X.

HENRI ROCHEFORT.

ABOUT 1859 I became acquainted with a most excellent fellow, an under-clerk in one of the departments at the Hôtel de Ville. His name was Henri Rochefort, but that name meant nothing then. Rochefort was leading a modest and very orderly life, living with his parents on the ancient Rue des Deux-Boules, close at hand to his place of employment in that swarming Saint-Denis Quartier, now invaded by commerce and by the petty industries of Paris, with their house-shops, plastered with signs from top to bottom, samples displayed and frames hung on the door-posts: "Feathers and Flowers — False Jewelry — Paper Toys and Silver Thread — Hollow Pearls;" — trades on every floor, a continuous roar of toil passing out through the windows into the street; drays loading, packages being corded, clerks running about with pens behind their ears; a work-girl passing in a smock-frock, with gold-filings clinging to her hair; and at intervals some sumptuous mansion transformed into warerooms, its escutcheon and carvings carrying your thoughts back two centuries and causing you to muse upon servants grown rich, bankers stuffed with gold, the Count of Horn, the Regent, Law and the Mississippi, the System,

in a word, upon the time when, in those streets now given over to commerce and the bourgeoisie, the most fabulous fortunes waxed and waned from hour to hour, with the ebb and flow of fever and of gold, as impassive as the tide, to and from that narrow reeking rift, close at hand, which is still called Rue Quincampoix! My friend Rochefort was a little like his street, and held his past very cheap. He was known to be of noble birth, the son of a count; he seemed not to know it himself, allowing people to call him plain Rochefort; and that American simplicity did not fail to make an impression on me, who had just landed in Paris from our vain, legitimist South.

Monsieur de Rochefort, the father, belonged to that generation of young men to whose future the Revolution of July, 1830, interposed an insurmountable obstacle, and whose careers it interrupted. An especially attractive and clever generation, preserving a sort of perfume of the old régime in the atmosphere of Louis-Philippe's reign, turning its back upon the new dynasty, but not upon France, attached to the elder branch, but knowing so well that any restoration was out of the question for a long while that its sceptical loyalty never displayed the sombre humor of the fanatic or sectary. While some protested against the dull monotony of bourgeois manners by descending the legendary pavement of La Courtille[1] with a great uproar, amid

[1] La Courtille, "a portion of the faubourgs on the northern side of Paris where there are many wineshops." The "descent of La Courtille" means the return of the maskers to Paris after celebrating Mardi Gras at La Courtille. — LITTRÉ.

the shouts of masked figures and the jangling of bells, or amused themselves by bombarding the Tuileries with volleys of champagne corks, others, less scatterbrained or less wealthy, tried to provide themselves by labor with resources for which they could no longer rely on the favor of the sovereign. Thus did M. de Lauzanne, whom we have seen very recently, still fresh and smiling, still erect despite his great age, still a gentleman despite his trade of vaudevillist and the sobriquet of Père Lauzanne bestowed upon him by the affectionate familiarity of his confrères; thus must M. de Rochefort's father have done, who was in his time a prominent figure among the ardent royalist youth and a particular friend of the ex-body-guard *Choca*. Having a fondness for strolling through the wings, the elder Rochefort, like Lauzanne, remembered the road to the theatre as soon as the cold weather arrived, and betook himself thither; but it was to seek his livelihood. Every lover of the theatre has an author under his skin, and it is an easy transition from applauding plays to trying to write them. M. de Rochefort-Luçay, then, wrote plays and became a vaudevillist.

These details were not unnecessary, because they may serve to give us an idea of Rochefort's childhood. A curious, characteristic, thoroughly Parisian childhood, passed wholly between the school and the theatrical world — which is more patriarchal than is generally supposed — the actors' and authors' cafés to which his father took him on Sunday, and where one heard, instead of the drunken

orgies dreamed of by provincials, the sharp sound of the dice thrown on the backgammon board, or of the dominoes as they were moved over the table. Thus Rochefort was the schoolboy, son of an artist or man of letters, of whom we have all known the type, initiated in his childhood into the secrets of the wings, calling famous actors by their names, familiar with the new plays, giving theatre tickets to his tutor on the sly, and acquiring thus the privilege of composing with impunity in the secrecy of his desk, between a tame lizard and a pipe, a heap of masterpieces, dramatic or other, which he will carry, on holidays, with his cap pulled over his eyes and his heart beating as if it would burst the buttons off his jacket, to drop them in the never-opened boxes of newspapers, or leave them with cunning theatre concierges. The destiny of such boys is all prearranged: at twenty they enter some department of the civil service, national or municipal, and continue to write secretly behind their desks, hiding from their superiors as they hid from their teachers. Rochefort did not escape the common fate. After having tried his hand at serious literature and sent I know not how many sonnets and odes to all the poetic competitions in France, always without success, when I first knew him he was using the pens and paper of the Parisian municipality to write petty theatrical reviews for *Charivari*, which was then changing its editorial management and trying to secure an infusion of younger blood.

Although I could not divine what Rochefort

would one day grow to be, his face interested me from the outset. It was evidently not the face of a man likely to be long content with that clerk's life, regulated by the coming and going of office hours as by the exasperating tic-tac of a cuckoo in the Black Forest. You are familiar with that unusual face, which was the same then that it has been ever since, that hair of the color of blazing punch over a too-expansive brow, a box for sick-headaches and a reservoir of enthusiasm, those black deep-set eyes gleaming in the shadow, that straight thin nose, that sneering mouth, in a word that whole face, lengthened by a beard trimmed to a point like a boy's top, which inevitably makes me think of a sceptical Don Quixote, or a Mephistopheles of a mild type. He was very thin, wore a villainous black coat that was too small for him, and had a habit of always keeping both hands buried in the pockets of his trousers. A deplorable habit, which made him appear even thinner than he really was, emphasizing wofully the sharpness of his elbows and the narrowness of his shoulders. He was of a generous disposition and a good friend, capable of the greatest sacrifices, and nervous and easily irritated beneath an appearance of coldness.

One day he had an affair with the manager of the *Gaulois*, growing out of some article or other, I do not now remember what it was. The *Gaulois* of that day — for the title of a newspaper in France has more incarnations than Buddha and passes through more hands than the King of Garbe's betrothed — the *Gaulois* of that day was one of

those ephemeral cabbage-leaves which spring up between the pavements in the neighborhood of theatre cafés and literary breweries. Its manager, a jovial, clever little fellow, chubby and pink-cheeked, was named Delvaille, if I remember aright, and signed Delbrecht, doubtless considering that the prettier name. Delvaille or Delbrecht, as you please, had challenged Rochefort. Rochefort would have preferred pistols, not that he was a very deadly shot, but he had sometimes won a prize at fairs; as for the sword, he did not remember that he had ever seen one, at a distance or close at hand. Delvaille, being the person insulted, had the choice of weapons and chose the sword. "Very good," said Rochefort, "I will fight with the sword." The duel was rehearsed in Pierre Véron's rooms. Rochefort was willing to be killed, but he did not wish to seem ridiculous. So Véron had sent for a tall devil of a sergeant-major of Zouaves, afterward cut in two at Solferino, who was very expert in the way of salutes, attitudes and good manners, as understood in the fencing-rooms in barracks: — "After you." "By no means." "I insist." "Go on, monsieur." After ten minutes' practice, Rochefort had attained, so far as grace was concerned, the level of any moustachioed La Ramée. The two champions met the next day, between Paris and Versailles, in those lovely Chaville woods which we knew well, as we often went there on Sundays intent upon less warlike pastimes. On that day a fine, chilly rain was falling, which made bubbles on the pond and veiled with a light mist

the green circle of the hills, a ploughed field on the slope and the reddish excavations of a gravel-pit. The combatants removed their shirts, notwithstanding the rain, and, except for the gravity of the occasion, one would have been tempted to laugh at the spectacle of those two standing face to face — that short, stout man, fair of skin, in a flannel undershirt stitched with blue about the hips, standing on guard as correctly as if on the fencing-room floor, and Rochefort, tall, thin, yellow, gaunt, and so cuirassed with bones as to make one doubt whether there was a crevice in his body for a sword to enter. Unluckily he had forgotten all the sergeant-major's valuable lessons over night, held his weapon like a candle, thrust like a deaf man and laid himself open. In the first exchange he received a straight thrust which slid along his ribs. The sword had drawn blood, but so little! That was his first duel.

I shall astonish no one when I say that at that time Rochefort possessed wit; but it was a sort of interior wit, a peculiar essence, consisting especially in stinging remarks long meditated, in unexpected combinations of astounding ideas, in monumental absurdities, in cold, savage jests, which he would utter between clenched teeth, in the voice of Cham and with the silent laughter of Leatherstocking. Unfortunately that wit remained congealed, useless. There were occasional good things to repeat, to laugh over a little between friends; but to write them, to print them, to rush through literature with such frantic capers — that

was what seemed impossible. Rochefort did not know himself; as almost always happens, it was a mere chance, an accident, that revealed him to himself. He had for a friend, for an inseparable companion, a most extraordinary puppet, whose name will certainly bring a smile to those of my own age who remember having known him. His name was Léon Rossignol. A perfect type of the son of a septuagenarian; one might say that he was born old. As thin and pale as a blade of grass growing in a cave, at eighteen he was an inveterate snuff-taker, coughed and spit and leaned with a dignified air on grandpapa's canes. Compounded of most incongruous elements, or rather having a screw loose somewhere in his brain, that excellent creature, strange to say! had a horror of blows and a great liking for quarrels. As impertinent and cowardly as Panurge, he was quite capable of insulting a carabineer in the street, reserving the right — if the carabineer took the jest in bad part — to fall upon his knees and implore forgiveness with such exaggerated humility that the insulted individual really did not know whether he ought to laugh or be angry. A great child, in short, weak and sickly, whom Rochefort loved for his vulgar chatter, witty after the style of the faubourgs, and whom he saved more than once from the consequences which certain too venturesome sallies might have brought upon his back. Rossignol, like Rochefort, was employed at the Hôtel de Ville. He had a perch there on the upper floor, under the eaves, in an out-of-the-way office at the

end of a labyrinth of narrow staircases and corridors, and there, in the capacity of superintendent of stationery, he gravely distributed, upon requisition, paper, pens, pencils, erasers, paper-cutters, paper-weights, pieces of rubber, jars of powdered pumice, blue ink, red ink, yellow sand, illustrated calendars, and heaven knows what — the innumerable useless articles with which the idle quill-drivers in the government departments love to surround themselves, and which are, as it were, the flowers of bureaucracy. Naturally, Rossignol too had his literary ambitions. To put his name upon something printed was his dream, and we, that is to say Pierre Véron, Rochefort and I, used to amuse ourselves by scratching off bits of articles for him or improvising quatrains, with which he would hurry off, as proud as Lucifer, to the *Tintamarre*. How strange are the effects of irresponsibility! Rochefort, who was always hampered by a tendency to imitate and to stick to the conventional lines when he wrote for himself, developed originality and individuality as soon as he began to write over the signature of Rossignol. He was free then, he no longer felt the irritated eye of the Institute following on the paper the by no means academic contortions of his thought and his style. And it was a pleasure to witness the untrammelled working of that mind, very cold, very nervous, astounding in its audacity and familiarity, with a fashion entirely its own of *feeling* the details of Parisian life and of making them the text for all sorts of buffooneries, planned with great patience and without pity,

wherein the words maintain the seriousness of a clown between two grimaces, contenting itself with a sly wink when the paragraph is finished.

"Why, this is charming, novel, original, it is like you; why don't you write thus on your own account?"

"Perhaps you are right; I must try."

Rochefort's style was found; now let the Empire look to itself.

Some one has said that it was de l'Arnal reduced to writing, and that Rochefort had simply arranged the dialogues of Duvert and Lauzanne in paragraphs. We do not deny the influence. Evidently certain ways of looking at things and certain tricks of speech, a certain habit — which had become a rule — of using the dialogue form and of making the thought perform strange antics, which, during the endless games of dominoes on Boulevard du Temple, had made an impression on his schoolboy's brain, were of some use to him later. But they are the unconscious imitations which nobody avoids altogether. There is no law, in literature, against picking up a rusty weapon; the important thing is to be able to sharpen the blade and to reforge the hilt to fit one's hand.

Rochefort made his first appearance in the *Nain Jaune*,[1] edited by Aurélien Scholl. Who does not know Scholl? If you have, no matter how infrequently, trodden the Parisian boulevard during the last thirty years, or visited its appurtenances, you certainly have noticed, it may be in front of Tor-

[1] Yellow Dwarf.

toni's pavilion, or under the lindens of Baden-Baden or the palms of Monte-Carlo, that eminently Parisian and boulevardist physiognomy. Scholl, by virtue of his always cheerful tone, his clear and concise workmanship, and the keen and slashing brilliancy of his style, when Paris was overrun by the patois of parliamentary scribes and the idiotic scribbling of reporters, was one of the last, one might almost say the very last, *petit* journalist. The *petit* journalist in the accepted meaning of the phrase, is a journalist who considers himself called upon to be at the same time a writer; the *grand* journalist dispenses with it. Like many others, in these later troublous times, Scholl, without intending any harm, gradually became involved in the political hurly-burly. He is in the thick of the fight now, and it is a pleasure to see that grandson of Rivarol, turned republican, directing against the enemies of the Republic the golden arrows, with a little curare rubbed on the point, borrowed from the reactionary arsenal of the *Acts of the Apostles*. But in the days of the *Nain Jaune* politics were stagnant and Scholl was hardly looking forward to a republic, any more than Rochefort. He was content to be one of the most good-natured sceptics and cleverest scoffers in Paris. Being very much in love with the *paroistre*, as a native of Bordeaux, he maintained — and in those days of the canonization of Bohemia the doctrine could not fail to savor slightly of paradox — he maintained that it is the duty of a man of letters to pay his bootmaker, and that one may be clever with fresh gloves and clean linen.

In conformity with his principles, he indulged in all the refinements of the period, even the monocle set into the eye, to which he still clings; he breakfasted at Bignon's and afforded the Parisians the truly novel spectacle of a simple news-writer partaking daily of egg in the shell and cutlets with the Duc de Grammont-Caderousse, the king of swelldom for the moment. The *Nain Jaune* was the only serious rival Villemessant ever encountered. Admirably seconded by his social connections, Scholl succeeded in a few months in making his paper the official sheet of high life and the clubs, the arbiter of Parisian fashion; but, after a year, he became disgusted with it, he was fitted for something better than that; he was too much of a writer, too much of a newspaper man to remain long a manager.

Rochefort's success in the *Nain Jaune* was rapid; in *Figaro*, which made haste to enlist him, it was even more brilliant. The Parisians, always inclined to grumble and for a long while unaccustomed to independence, enjoyed those pamphlets, which introduced the fashion of addressing themselves in familiar language, in a tone of good-humored mockery, to all sorts of solemn and official matters which hitherto even the boldest had hardly dared to make fun of beneath their breath. Rochefort is fairly launched, he fights duels — with better fortune than the one on the shore of the pond at Chaville; he plays a bold game, lives freely, fills Paris with the echoes of his name, and remains in spite of everything, in spite of the triumph of an evening or

of a single hour, the same Rochefort whom I had known at the Hôtel de Ville, still of a kindly and obliging disposition, still modest, always anxious concerning the next article, always afraid that he has emptied his bag, exhausted the lode and that he will be unable to go on.

Villemessant, naturally despotic with his editors, had a sort of awestruck admiration for him. That impassive, scoffing mask, that self-willed and capricious temperament astonished him. It is a fact that Rochefort was extraordinarily obstinate and had strange whims. I have described elsewhere the effect of his article concerning M. de Saint-Rémy's theatrical works, and the mischievous familiarity with which he dealt the *coup de grâce* to that ill-fated presidential and ducal volume, which all the Dangeaus, all the Jules Lecomtes of journalism crowned with the most flattering periods. Paris was delighted with his audacity; Morny was touched to the quick by it and appealed from it.[1] With the candor of an irritated author, well adapted to cause wonder when displayed by a man of intellect, he sent his dramatic works to Jouvin, confident that Jouvin would have more taste than Rochefort and would publish a compensatory article in *Figaro*.

Jouvin accepted the volume, did not write the article, and the unhappy duke was compelled to

[1] The Duc de Morny, died 1865, President of the Council (introduced by Daudet as the Duc de Mora in the *Nabob*), wrote plays under the nom de plume of M. de Saint-Rémy. — *Vide ante*, p. 24.

keep in his heart the bitter prose that Rochefort had forced him to swallow. Thereupon an extraordinary thing took place, improbable at first glance, but in spite of everything profoundly human. Morny, the flattered and fawned upon, the omnipotent, suddenly conceived for the man who was not afraid to poke fun at him, a sort of timid, spiteful affection. He desired to see him, to know him, to have an explanation with him, as between two friends, in a corner. His adherents exerted all their ingenuity to prove that Rochefort possessed neither wit nor style, and that his judgment was entitled to no weight. Sycophants (a vice-emperor never lacks them!) went about upon the quays collecting little vaudevilles, youthful sins of Rochefort's, analyzed them, plucked them to pieces, and maintained by dint of a thousand conclusive arguments that M. de Saint-Rémy's were far superior to them. Imaginary crimes were imputed to Rochefort. A fanatical saint came running in one day, red with virtuous indignation, his eyes starting from his head; "You know Rochefort, that famous Rochefort who makes himself out such a paragon? Well, what do you suppose we 've discovered about him? He was a *boursier* of the Empire!"[1] What a black-hearted wretch he must be, after having been a *boursier* of the Empire at the age of eight, to consider Monsieur le Duc's plays vile trash at the age of thirty! A little more, and they would have held Rochefort responsible

[1] That is to say, he had pecuniary assistance from the government while he was at the public school.

for his nurse's political opinions! Vain efforts; fruitless revelations. Morny, like a rejected lover, became more and more persistent in his fixed idea of winning Rochefort's regard. The whim became a mania, a mania the more besetting because Rochefort, being advised as to what was in the wind, displayed a sort of comical coquetry in avoiding the duke's acquaintance. I can see Morny stopping Villemessant in the corridor at the first performance of *La Belle Hélène* — "You really must introduce me to Rochefort this time!" — "Monsieur le Duc! Yes, Monsieur le Duc! We were talking about that very thing not a second ago." — And Villemessant ran after Rochefort, but Rochefort had disappeared. Thereupon it occurred to some one to resort to stratagem, to form a sort of conspiracy to bring the duke and Rochefort together. The latter was known to be a great authority on curios — did he not publish the *Little Mysteries of the Public Auction Room?* — and a zealous collector of pictures. The duke had an interesting gallery. They would bring Rochefort to see the gallery, the duke would happen to be there at the time, and the introduction would naturally follow. The day is appointed, a friend undertakes to bring Rochefort, the duke is waiting in his gallery; he waits one hour, two hours, tête-à-tête with his Rembrandts and his Hobbemas, and again the longed-for monster does not appear.

So long as the duke lived — by the merest chance, doubtless, for I do not think that that friendship at long range and so inadequately re-

quited can have extended so far as to protect the ungrateful pamphleteer against the thunderbolts of the law — so long as the duke lived, Rochefort was hounded comparatively little. But when Morny had disappeared the persecutions began. Rochefort, spurred on by them, redoubled his insolence and audacity. Fines poured down upon him like hail, imprisonment succeeded fines. Ere long the censorship took a hand. The censorship with its sensitive palate as a taster of principles concluded that everything that Rochefort wrote had a political after-taste. *Figaro's* very existence was threatened, and Rochefort had to leave the paper. Thereupon he founded *La Lanterne*, unmasked his batteries and boldly hoisted the pirate's flag. Once more it was Villemessant, Villemessant the conservative, the Villemessant of the rascals assembled around the green table, who freighted that fireship. The censorship and Villemessant on that occasion rendered a peculiar service to conservatism and the Empire. Everyone knows the history of *La Lanterne*, its bewildering success, the little flame-colored paper in every hand, sidewalks, cabs, railway-carriages all gleaming with red sparks, the government beside itself, the scandal, the prosecution, the suppression and — the expected and inevitable result — Rochefort Deputy for Paris.

Even there Rochefort remained the same; he carried to the benches of the Chamber, to the tribune, the insulting familiarity of his pamphlets, and refused, to the very end, to treat the Empire as a serious adversary. Do you remember the

sensation? A ministerial orator, adopting a lofty tone, with the disdain with which a stiff, precise parliamentarian may look upon a simple journalist, had made use of the word ridiculous in reference to him. Rochefort rose from his bench, pale and with clenched teeth, and, lashing the sovereign across the face over the heads of his ministers, exclaimed: "I may have been ridiculous sometimes, but no one ever met me in the costume of a tooth-extractor, with an eagle on my shoulder and a piece of bacon in my hat!" — M. Schneider was presiding that day. Well do I remember the terror depicted on his fat, good-natured countenance. And, imagining in its place the Duc de Morny's refined, impassive, sneering face, with its silky moustaches, I said to myself: "What a pity he is not here! he would have gratified his whim at last and made Rochefort's acquaintance."

I have seen Rochefort but twice since then: the first time was at the burial of Victor Noir,[1] riding in a cab, fainting, exhausted by a two hours' struggle beside Delescluze against a frantic crowd, two hundred thousand unarmed men with women and children, who insisted with all their might upon taking the body to Paris where the cannon awaited them, upon marching to certain slaughter. And I saw him once more during the war, in the chaos of the battle of Buzenval, amid the crackling of musketry, the dull roar of the heavy guns of

[1] Victor Noir was a journalist who was shot near Paris in January, 1870, by Prince Pierre Bonaparte, in an altercation over a newspaper article published by the prince.

the forts, the rumbling of ambulance wagons, amid the feverish excitement and the smoke, bishops riding about on horseback in masquerade costumes and gallant bourgeois going forth to be killed, full of confidence in the Trochu plan; amid the heroic and the grotesque, amid that never-to-be-forgotten drama, moulded, like Shakespeare's, from the sublime and the comical, which is known to history as the siege of Paris. It was on the road to Mont Valérien; it was cold and muddy, the leafless trees shivering sadly against the lowering sky. My friend passed in a carriage, still pale and gaunt as I saw him through the glass, still tightly buttoned in a scanty black coat, as in the far-off days at the Hôtel de Ville. I cried out to him through the storm: "How are you, Rochefort?" I have never seen him since.[1]

[1] This portrait of Rochefort appeared in Russia, in the *New Times* (*Novoë Vremya*) in 1879.

XI.

HENRY MONNIER.

I SEE myself in my youthful garret, in winter, with frost on the window-panes and a hearth à la Prussienne, with no fire. Sitting in front of a small, unpainted wooden table, I am at work scribbling verses, my legs enveloped in a travelling rug. Some one knocks. "Come in!" And a decidedly fantastic spectacle appears in the doorway. Imagine a protruding stomach, a false collar, a ruddy, clean-shaven bourgeois face, and a Roman nose surmounted by spectacles. The individual bows ceremoniously and says: "I am Henry Monnier."

Henry Monnier, a celebrity of that period! Actor, author, designer, all in one; people pointed him out on the street, and M. de Balzac, a keen observer, esteemed him highly for his powers of observation. Observation of a strange sort, it must be said, which in no wise resembles the observation of most people. Many writers have acquired wealth and renown by making sport of the faults and infirmities of others. But Monnier did not go far in search of his model: he planted himself before his mirror, listened to himself think and speak, and, deeming himself prodigiously ridiculous, he conceived that pitiless incarnation,

that tremendous satire of the French citizen of the middle class, known as Joseph Prudhomme.[1] For Monnier is Joseph Prudhomme and Joseph Prudhomme is Monnier. They have everything in common, from the white gaiters to the cravat with thirty-six turns. The same swelling turkey's frill, the same burlesque air of solemnity, the same commanding glance through the golden circle of the spectacles, the same unmeaning apothegms pronounced in the voice of an old vulture with the influenza. "If I could only come out of my skin for an hour or two," says Fantasio to his friend Spark, "if I could be that gentleman who is passing!" Monnier, who bore only a distant resemblance to Fantasio, never desired to be the gentleman who was passing; as he possessed in a higher degree than any other person the curious faculty of bipartition, he came out of his skin sometimes to laugh at himself and his own make-up; but he very soon resumed the cherished skin, the precious envelope, and that pitiless satirist, that cruel scoffer, that Attila of bourgeois idiocy, became once more, in private life, the most artlessly idiotic of bourgeois.

Among other preoccupations, really worthy of Joseph Prudhomme, Henry Monnier was possessed of a fixed idea, common, by the way, among all

[1] The salient feature of Monnier's creation of Prudhomme is his custom of making the most trivial, often the most idiotic remarks with the utmost solemnity of manner. He was the outcome of his sketches of popular types made in M. Girodet's studio and combined with comical (written) sketches. The character was developed more carefully in his later works.

provincial magistrates who write wretched impromptu verses, and among all the ex-colonels who employ their leisure hours on half-pay translating Horace: he wished to bestride Pegasus, to don Thalia's buskins, to stoop, at the risk of bursting his braces, and scoop up a little of the pure stream of Hippocrene in the hollow of his hand; he dreamed of laurel wreaths, of academic triumphs, of a play accepted at the Théâtre-Français. Already — does any one remember it to-day — a play of his had been produced on the Odéon stage — a play in three acts and in verse, by your leave! as the posters say: *Peintres et Bourgeois*, written in collaboration with a young man, a travelling salesman, I believe, and very expert in the art of turning rhymes. The Odéon is very well; but the Français, Molière's play-house! And for twenty years Henry Monnier prowled about the famous temple, haunted the Café de la Régence, the Café Minerve, every place patronized by the members of the company, always dignified and well-dressed, clean-shaven like a noble father, and with the knowing, self-satisfied air of the typical argumentative personage of the old plays.

The worthy man had read my poems, he relied upon me to assist him to realize his dream, and it was to propose to me that we should work together that he had climbed the numerous and steep flights of stairs to my lodging on Rue de Tournon, puffing slightly with the exertion. You can imagine whether I felt flattered and whether I accepted the offer joyfully!

The next morning I was at his house; he lived on Rue Ventadour, in an old house of bourgeois exterior, where he occupied a small apartment of very characteristic aspect, which smelt of the economical, careful actor of virtuous habits as well as of the old bachelor. Everything, furniture and floor, glistened with cleanliness. In front of each chair was a small round mat with a border of red cloth carefully pinked. Four cuspidores, one in each corner. On the mantel were two saucers, each containing a few pinches of very dry snuff. Monnier took a pinch occasionally, but offered me none.

That apartment produced an impression of avarice on me at first. I have learned since that that parsimonious exterior concealed a very hard life. Monnier was without means; from time to time only, a performance of one of his plays, a newspaper article, the sale of a few sketches augmented, but to no considerable extent, his slender revenues, So he had gradually adopted the habit of dining out every day. People were glad to invite him. He paid for his dinner by telling, by acting rather — for there was nothing extemporaneous in his performance — salacious stories at dessert. Perhaps it was particularly indecent dialogue, with imitations of both voices; or else his favorite hero, Monsieur Prudhomme, carrying his paunch and his imperturbable solemnity through the most *risqué* adventures. And all without a smile, for the bourgeois element in Henry Monnier's character rebelled secretly against that rôle of buffoon. And furthermore he was despotically exacting in

certain respects: he must have a quarter of an hour's nap, for instance, after the repast, however exalted the place; and there were fits of jealousy and sulkiness, the angry outbursts of an old parrot at any one who steals his cutlet bone, if by chance it happened that some other than he took the floor and seemed likely to eclipse him. At one time there was a plan to obtain a pension for him: it would have been wealth to him; but at that juncture his after-dinner pleasantry served the poor man a bad turn. Malassis had published a collection of his anecdotes in Belgium, a copy crossed the frontier, ministerial prudery declared itself insulted thereby, and the promised pension vanished on the spot. Do not confuse them with the *Bas-fonds de Paris*, which might seem, in comparison with them, to have been written for young girls, although the publication was authorized only by special favor, and of such a limited number of copies and at a price so high that the volume could not in any event exert its baneful influence beyond the excommunicate frontiers of the world of bibliophiles.

Such was the twofold man — *homo duplex* — who did me the honor to wish to associate his literary labors with mine. Slave of my imagination as I was at twenty, I might perhaps have come to terms with the buffoon; but, unfortunately, it was the bourgeois Prudhomme, and the bourgeois Prudhomme alone, who suggested collaboration with me. After a few sessions I went no more. Doubtless Henry Monnier felt little regret, and naught

remains of my first dream of glory save the memory of that comical old man, in his poor, neat home, smoking little pipes with little puffs in the leather arm-chair, in which he was found dead one morning fifteen years ago!

Henri Margery

XII.

THE END OF A MOUNTEBANK AND OF MURGER'S BOHEMIA.

WHEN I was about eighteen years old, I met a most extraordinary character, who appears to my mind, at a distance, as the living incarnation of a world apart, with a language and strange manners of its own, a world to-day vanished and almost forgotten, but which filled a great space at that time in the Paris of the Empire. I refer to that gypsy band, irregular troops of art, rebellious subjects of philosophy and letters, capricious followers of all caprices, audaciously camped in front of the Louvre and the Institute, which Henri Murger, not without embellishing and idealizing the picture a little, has commemorated under the name of Bohemia. We will call this personage Desroches. I had met him at a ball in the Latin Quarter, with some friends, one summer evening. Having returned home very late — to my little room on Rue de Tournon — I was sleeping soundly the next morning, when there appeared at the foot of my bed a gentleman in a black coat, a scanty coat of that curious shade of black which only police officers and undertakers' men have the art of obtaining.

"I come from Monsieur Desroches."

"Monsieur Desroches? Who is Monsieur Desroches?" I exclaimed, rubbing my eyes, for my memory persisted in waking much later than my body that morning.

"Monsieur Desroches, of *Figaro;* you passed last evening together; he is at the police station and refers to you."

"Monsieur Desroches — why, yes — of course — he refers to me; very well, let him go!"

"I beg your pardon, it will be thirty sous!"

"Thirty sous! Why?"

"That's the custom."

I produced the thirty sous. The black coat departed, and I remained seated on my bed, half dreaming and with no very clear comprehension of the strange adventures which had resulted in my being called upon — a newly enlisted Brother of Mercy — to ransom an editor of *Figaro* from the claws, not of the Turks but of the police, at a cost of one franc fifty.

My reflections were not of long duration. Five minutes later Desroches, freed from his fetters, entered my apartment smiling.

"A thousand pardons, my dear confrère, this is all the fault of the *Raisins Muscats*[1] — yes, the *Raisins Muscats*, my first article, which appeared yesterday in *Figaro*. Accursed Muscat grapes! I had received the money, you understand — my first money — and it went to my head. We wandered all over the quarter after leaving you, and — my memory is a little confused, but I have a vague

[1] Muscat grapes.

sensation of receiving a kick somewhere. Then I found myself in the station; a charming night! First they put me down below, you know — the black hole; how it stunk! but I made the fellows laugh, they were glad enough to take me with them into the guardhouse; we talked and played cards — I had to read them the *Raisins Muscats*, a great success! Wonderful, what good taste policemen have!"

Imagine my stupefaction and the effect produced upon an ingenuous provincial youth like myself by the revelation of such disorderly morals in literary men! And my confrère who thus described his adventures was a plump little man, well brushed and shaved, with an affectation of polished manners, whose white gaiters and frock-coat of bourgeois cut formed a most perfect contrast to his frantic gestures and the contortions of his mountebank's face. He surprised and alarmed me, he realized that fact and evidently took pleasure in exaggerating for my benefit the cynicism of his paradoxes.

"I like you," he said, as he left me; "pray come and see me next Sunday afternoon. I live in a fascinating nook, near the Château des Brouillards, on the hills, the side overlooking Saint-Ouen, — you know where I mean — Gérard de Nerval's vineyard! I will introduce you to my wife; she is well worth the journey. I have just received a fresh cask of wine; we will drink it by the goblet, as they do at the wholesale wineshops at Bercy, and we will sleep in the cellar. And then a friend of mine, a Dominican unfrocked day before yes-

terday, is to come and read me a drama in five acts. You shall hear him! a superb subject; full of ravishing and that sort of thing — that is understood. Gérard de Nerval's vineyard, don't forget the address!"

All of Desroches' promises were fulfilled. We drank the new wine, and in the evening the alleged Dominican read us his drama. Dominican or not, he was a tall, magnificent Breton, with broad shoulders modelled for the gown, and with something of the preacher in the fulness of his voice and his gestures. He afterwards made a name for himself in the world of letters. His drama did not surprise me. It is true that, after an afternoon at Gérard de Nerval's vineyard, in what Desroches called his interior, surprise was not easily aroused.

Before climbing the hills, it had occurred to me to read once more the exquisite pages which Gérard, the lover of *Sylvie*, in his *Promenades et Souvenirs*, devotes to a description of that northern slope of Montmartre, a corner of the fields enclosed within the walls of Paris, and all the dearer and more precious to us on that account: — "We still have a number of hills girdled with dense green hedges which the barberry adorns with its violet flowers and later with its purplish berries. There are windmills, wineshops and arbors, rustic elysiums and silent lanes; there is even one vineyard there, the last of the famous vintage of Montmartre, which, in Roman times, rivalled Argenteuil and Suresnes. Each year that humble hill loses one row of its stunted vines, which fall into a

quarry. Ten years ago I might have bought it for ten thousand francs; I would have built such a light and airy house in that vineyard! a little villa in the Pompeiian style, with an *impluvium* and a *cella*."

In that Greek poet's dream my friend Desroches dwelt. There it was — oh! shocking antithesis! — that, on a lovely, bright summer's day, beneath an arbor of flowering elder-bushes in which swarms of bees were buzzing, he presented to me an androgynous monster in a wagoner's costume: blue blouse, velvet waistcoat, a cap with red stripes tipped over her ear, and a whip over her shoulder.

"Monsieur Alphonse Daudet — Madame Desroches!"

For that monster was really his wife, his lawful wife, always dressed in that costume, which pleased her and which, to be sure, harmonized as well as possible with her masculine face and voice. Smoking, spitting, swearing, with all the vices of the other sex, she managed the household with loud cracks of the whip; first of all her husband, who was thoroughly tamed, and then two thin daughters — her daughters! — of a curious, boy-like build, whose thirteen and fifteen years, ripened prematurely and gone to seed, gave promise of all that their mother's forty years displayed. It was indeed well worth the journey, as he had said, to make the acquaintance of that household.

And yet Desroches was the son of a wealthy Parisian tradesman in good standing, a manufacturer of jewelry, I believe. His father had cursed

him several times and paid him a small allowance. It is not an uncommon experience in France to find these wild creatures, a sort of scourge sent by God, appearing suddenly in families to disturb their tranquillity and put the hoarded gold pieces in circulation; in short, to punish the bourgeoisie in those of its sentiments which are too egotistically bourgeois. And I have known more than one of these ducklings, hatched by hens, who, as soon as they have burst their shells, have waddled away to the pond. The pond is art, letters, the trade that is open to all without licence or diploma. Desroches, then, on leaving school, had paddled about in art, in all the arts. He had begun with painting, and that cynic's passage through the studios, cold-blooded, punctual in his attendance, close-mouthed, and retaining, amid the wildest flights of his imagination, the stigma, the indelible brand of his borgeois origin, had become a sort of legend. As painting would have none of him, Desroches fell upon literature. He had just written the *Raisins Muscats* — inspired by his vineyard perhaps — a hundred lines, an article! He tried in vain afterward to write another; he never could strike the vein again and reached the age of forty with the *Raisins Muscats* for his complete works!

The conversation, the sky-rockets of friend Desroches amused me; but his home was by no means attractive to me. I went no more to Montmartre, but I sometimes crossed the river in the evening to meet him at the brewery on Rue des Martyrs. The *Brasserie des Martyrs*, now such a

peaceful resort, where the drapers on the street go for their game of checkers, was at that time a power in literature. The brewery issued decrees, reputations were made by the brewery; and in the profound silence of the Empire, Paris turned to listen to the noise made there every evening by eighty or a hundred good fellows as they smoked their pipes and emptied the beer-glasses. They were called Bohemians and they did not resent it. The *Figaro* of those days, which was non-political and appeared only once a week, was generally their tribune.

You should have seen the brewery — we used to call it the Brewery, just as the Romans said the City when speaking of Rome — you should have seen the brewery about eleven o'clock when all the voices were talking at once and all the pipes lighted.

Murger was enthroned at the table in the centre; Murger, the Homer of that world by him discovered, to which his fancy has imparted a somewhat roseate hue. Although he was then decorated and famous, publishing his novels in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, he still came to the brewery none the less, to retemper himself, he said, and also to receive the homage of the honest fellows he had described. He was pointed out to me: a fat, melancholy face, red eyes and a scanty beard, indications of second-rate Parisian blood. He lived at Marlotte, near the forest of Fontainebleau; he always had a rifle on his shoulder, pretending to hunt, but pursuing health rather than partridges

or hares. His residence in the village had attracted thither a whole Parisian colony, men and women, flowers of the asphalt and the brewery, who produced a curious effect under the great oaks; Marlotte still feels it. Ten years after Murger's death — he died, as every one knows, at the Hôpital Dubois. — I happened to be there with a few friends one day, at Mère Antony's, a famous wine-shop! An old peasant was drinking near where we sat, a peasant *à la* Balzac, with a tanned, earth-colored face. An old woman came to fetch him, dressed in rags, with a red handkerchief about her head. She called him glutton, drunkard; and he tried to make her drink.

"Your wife is n't very mild in her manners!" said some one, when she had gone.

"She ain't my wife, she's my mistress!" retorted the old peasant.

You should have heard the tone in which he said it! The goodman evidently had known Murger and his friends, and was leading the bohemian life after his fashion.

Let us return to the brewery. As my eyes became accustomed to the stinging of the smoke, I saw famous faces emerge through the mist, on the right hand and the left, from every corner.

Each great man had his table, which became the kernel, the centre of a whole clan of admirers.

Pierre Dupont, old at forty-five, stout and bent, his beautiful eye, like that of an ox, hardly visible beneath its drooping lid, would sit with his elbows on the table, trying to sing some of the political or

rustic ballads with the golden rhythm, quivering with the splendid dreams of '48, resonant with the sounds of the thousand trades of the Croix-Rousse, fragrant with the thousand perfumes of the Lyonnese valleys. The voice was no longer there, it had been burned by alcohol and resembled a death-rattle.

"You need the fields, my poor Pierre!" said Gustave Mathieu, the singer of *Bons Vins*, the *Coq Gaulois*, and *Les Hirondelles*. Mathieu, born of excellent bourgeois stock in the Nivernais, had travelled in his youth, and retained from his travels a most intense fondness for fresh air and the open country. He found them both in the neighborhood of his little house at Bois-le-Roi, and seldom visited the brewery except to walk through, erect and smiling, with the air of a Henri IV., and a bunch of wild flowers in his buttonhole at all seasons.

Dupont died, wretchedly enough, at Lyon, in the smoky manufacturing city. He was as sound and as thin as a vine-shoot. Mathieu outlived him a long while. It was only a few years ago, after a brief illness, that his friends escorted his body to the little cemetery at Bois-le-Roi, separated only by a slender hedge from the open fields; a fitting cemetery for a poet, where he sleeps under the roses in the shade of the oaks.

The first evening that I saw Gustave Mathieu, a tall, thin, red-haired devil, with the swaggering airs of a bully, was seated beside him, mimicking his voice, copying his gestures: Fernand Desnoyers, an original creature who wrote *Bras-Noir*, a panto-

mime in verse! On the other side of the table, some one was arguing with Dupont; it was Reyer, shrunken and excitable, who was jotting down the airs composed without musical talent by the poet; Reyer, the future author of the *Statue*, of *Sigurd*, and of so many other beautiful works.

How many memories that mere name, the Brewery, evokes within me! how many faces that I first saw there in the reflection of the beer mugs, through the dense smoke!

Let me mention at random a few names of those who still survive, while the great majority have vanished. Here is Monselet, refined prose-writer, refined poet; M. de Cupidon, plump and curled and smiling, resembles a gallant abbé of the old *régime;* one looks for the little cloak on his back, the little cloak as buoyant as a pair of wings. Champfleury, too, at that time the leader of a school, the father of realism, who confounded in the same frantic passion Wagner's music, old porcelain and pantomime. Porcelain finally won the day: Champfleury, his dearest ambition satisfied, is to-day superintendent of the ceramic museum at Sèvres.

Here is Castagnary, in a waistcoat with broad lapels, *à la* Robespierre, cut from the velvet cover of an old easy-chair. He is chief clerk to a solicitor, but has escaped from the office to come and recite Victor Hugo's *Châtiments*, with all their flavor of forbidden fruit. He is surrounded and acclaimed; but he is off again to find Courbet; he must see Courbet, he must talk with Courbet about

his *Philosophy of Art in the Salon of* 1857. Without renouncing art, and continuing to write with graceful pen more than one noteworthy page upon our annual Salons, the sly Saintongeois,[1] always smiling a cunning smile behind his drooping moustaches, has allowed himself to glide by slow degrees into politics. Municipal Councillor, then manager of the *Siècle*, and to-day a member of the Council of State, he no longer declaims poetry and no longer wears a red waistcoat.

Here is Charles Baudelaire, a great poet beset by a passion for the unexplored in art, in philosophy by fear of the unknown. Victor Hugo said of him that he invented a new shiver. In truth, no one else has succeeded as he has done in making the souls of things speak; no one has brought from a greater distance those flowers of evil, brilliant and strange as tropical flowers, which grow apace, swollen with poison, in the mysterious depths of the human soul. A patient, sensitive artist, devoting much thought to the turn of the phrase and the choice of words, Baudelaire, by a cruel sarcasm of fate, lost the power of speech before he died, retaining his intelligence intact, as was made painfully clear by the plaint of his black eye, but unable to translate his thoughts except by the same indistinct oath, mechanically repeated again and again. Correct and cold in bearing, endowed with a wit as cutting as English steel, and with a courtesy that seemed paradoxical, he astonished the habitués of the brewery by drinking liqueurs from across the Chan-

[1] Native of Saintonge.

nel, in company with Constantin Guys, the designer, or Malassis, the publisher.

Such a publisher as we seldom see was that same Malassis; a clever fellow, with a curious taste for letters, he devoured a handsome provincial fortune in royal fashion by printing the works of people whom he liked. He too is dead, he died smiling, far from rich, but without a complaint. And I never think without emotion of that jovial, pale face, made longer by the two points of a reddish beard, a Mephistopheles of the days of the Valois.

Alphonse Duchesne and Delvan, two more who have gone, I used also to see in a corner at the brewery. A strange destiny, that of that generation, so soon mowed down, in which no one passes his fortieth year! Delvan, a Parisian interested in Paris, who admired her in her beauties, loved her in her blemishes, the descendant of Mercier and Rétif de la Bretonne, whose little books, very carefully written, filled with trivial facts and picturesque observations, have become a feast for gourmands and the joy of bibliophiles. Alphonse Duchesne, at that time heated by his quarrel with Francisque Sarcey who, planting the banner of the Normal School in front of the banner of the Bohemians, had just made his début in literature with a bellicose article: *Les Mélancoliques de Brasserie*.[1]

It was at the brewery that Alphonse Duchesne and Delvan wrote those *Letters of Junius*, which a

[1] As these pages were passing through the press the news came of Francisque Sarcey's death (May, 1899).

mysterious messenger delivered every week at the office of *Figaro*, and which turned Paris topsy-turvy. Villemessant swore by the mysterious Junius. He was evidently some great personage. Everything indicated it: the style of the letters, their insolent, aristocratic tone, a flavor of nobility and of the old faubourg. Imagine his rage, therefore, on the day when the mask fell to the ground, and he learned that those aristocratic pages were written by two needy Bohemians on a wine-shop table, to eke out their living! Poor Delvan! poor Duchesne! Villemessant never forgave them.

I pass on, for it would require a whole volume to describe the whole brewery, table by table. Here is the thinkers' table: these fellows say nothing, they do not write; they think. We admire them on trust, we say that they are as deep as wells, and indeed one can readily believe it to watch them swallow beer. Bald heads, dishevelled beards, an odor of cheap tobacco, cabbage soup and philosophy.

Farther on, blouses, skull-caps, cries of animals, thrusts and parries, puns; those are artists, sculptors, painters. In their midst a sweet, refined face, Alexandre Leclerc, whose fanciful frescoes covering the walls of the Moulin-de-Pierre tavern at Châtillon the Prussians destroyed.

They found him dead one day; he had hanged himself, sitting down and pulling himself up by a rope, in the midst of a multitude of graves in the highest part of Père-Lachaise, where Balzac stands calling Rastignac's attention to the immensity of

Paris. In my memories of the brewery Alexandre Leclerc is always in high spirits, singing Picardie ballads; and those provincial airs, those rustic verses diffused about his table, in the tobacco-reeking atmosphere, an indefinable perfume, poetic and pervading, of the country and of waving fields of grain.

And then the women, whom I had forgotten, for there are women there, ex-models, lovely creatures if slightly faded. Unusual faces and strange names, sobriquets which smell of bad places, pretentious *des:* Titine *de* Barancy and Louise Coup-de-Couteau. Abnormal types, strangely refined, for, having passed from hand to hand, they have retained a sort of smearing of artistic erudition from each of their innumerable liaisons. They have opinions on every subject, and declare themselves, according to the views of the lover for the time being, realist or idealist, Catholic or atheist. It is affecting and laughable.

Some new ones there are, quite young, just admitted by the awe-inspiring areopagus; but most of them have grown old there and have acquired by prescription a species of uncontested authority. And then there are the widows, the ancient flames of famous authors or artists, engaged in superintending the education of some débutant recently arrived from his province. And all of them sprawling about, smoking cigarettes which contribute their tiny bluish spirals to the gray fog of pipe-smoke and breath.

The beer flows freely, the waiters run to and fro,

the discussions wax warmer; there are excited exclamations, arms raised in air, manes shaken threateningly, and in the thick of it, shouting for two, gesticulating for four, standing on a table and apparently swimming in an ocean of heads, Desroches guides and dominates with his mountebank's voice the deafening uproar of the fair. He looks well so, with an inspired air, his shirt open, his cravat untied and floating in the wind, a true natural son of Rameau's nephew!

He comes here every evening to stupefy himself, to fuddle himself with talk and beer, to arrange collaborations, to tell of his projects in the way of writing books, to lie to himself and to forget that his home has become hateful to him, sedentary work impossible, and that he would not even be capable of writing the *Raisins Muscats* again.

Doubtless there were noble minds at the brewery, intent upon serious subjects; and sometimes a beautiful poem, an eloquent paradox freshened the atmosphere like a current of pure air, and scattered the pipe-smoke. But for every man of talent, how many Desroches! For a few moments of elevating excitement, how many unhealthy, wasted hours!

And then what dejection on the morrow, what bitter awakenings with the depression caused by nausea, what disgust with such a life without the moral strength to change it! Look at Desroches; he no longer laughs, his grimace vanishes, he is thinking of the children who are growing up, of the wife who is growing older and becoming more and more degraded, of the whip and the cap and

the smock-frock, of the wagoner's costume, which was amusing one evening long ago, when she wore it for the first time at a ball, but is sickening to-day.

When those black thoughts seized him Desroches would disappear, go away into the provinces, dragging his strange family after him.

Dealer in watches, actor at Odessa, bailiff's follower at Brussels, juggler's assistant — what extraordinary trades had he not followed? Then he would return, speedily tired out and disgusted, even with that.

One day, in the Bois de Boulogne, he tried to hang himself, but some keepers cut him down. They made fun of him at the brewery and he himself talked about his adventure with an affected little laugh. Some time after, having determined to make an end of it, he threw himself into one of those horrible quarries, abysses of limestone and clay, which are numerous about the fortifications of Paris. He passed the night there with his ribs crushed, his wrists and thighs broken. He was still alive when they took him out.

"Deuce take it!" he said, "they will call me the man who always misses fire."

Those were his last words. He lived in agony for sixty days, then died. I shall never forget him.

XIII.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — JACK.

I HAVE before me, on the table on which I am writing these lines, a photograph by Madar, the portrait of a boy of some eighteen or twenty years, a sweet, sickly face with undecided features, the eyes of a child, playful and clear, whose animation contrasts sharply with a weak mouth, flabby and drooping as if the muscles had lost their elasticity, the mouth of a poor man who has suffered much. It is a portrait of Raoul D—, the Jack of my book, as he was when I knew him in the latter part of 1868, as he was when I welcomed him at the little house I was then occupying at Champrosay — shivering with cold, round-shouldered, his arms drawing his thin coat tight over a narrow chest in which the cough rang like a funeral knell.

We were neighbors in the forest of Sénart. Already ill, worn to a shadow by the terribly laborious life forced upon him by the whim of a lover of his mother's, he had come to seek rest in the country, in a large solitary house, much out of repair, where he lived like Robinson Crusoe, with a bag of potatoes and credit for a daily loaf at the baker's at Soisy. Not a sou had he, not even enough to pay his passage to Paris. When he

was homesick for a sight of his mother, he did six good leagues on foot, and returned exhausted but overjoyed; for he adored his mother, spoke of her with affectionate admiring enthusiasm, the respect of a half-breed for his white wife, the superior being. "Mamma is a canoness!" he said to me one day, and in such a tone of conviction that I had not the heart to ask him of what chapter. But a few remarks of that sort enabled me to judge what manner of woman that foolish creature was, ambitious of titles, of noble connections, who consented to make her child a mechanic. Why, at one time she told him that he was the son of the Marquis de P——, a name well known under the Empire! And the idea of being a nobleman's son amused the poor boy, seasoned his distress and the usual melancholy of the old dairy farm with a spice of vanity. Later, forgetting that first confession, she gave him for a father an officer of high rank in the artillery; and it was impossible to say which time she lied, or whether she spoke with honest intention, at the will of her capricious vanity and of a heavily laden memory. In my book this characteristic detail offended certain readers; although taken from real life, it seemed an exaggeration of the psychologist, who most assuredly would never have invented it.

But Raoul forgave his mother even that; and I have never seen any other indication of rancor on his part than a sad smile which implored pardon for the mad creature. "What would you have? she is made that way."—It should be said, too,

that the common people know nothing of many moral refinements and delicate shades of feeling; and Raoul was of the common people, among whom he had been thrown at the age of eleven, after a few months passed at a fashionable boarding school at Anteuil. From that experiment in bourgeois education, he had retained some vague notions, names of authors, titles of books, and a great love for study which he had never been able to satisfy. Now that the doctor forbade him to do any manual labor, and I threw the doors of my library wide open to him, he turned his attention to reading, and read ravenously, like a famished man making up for lost time. He would leave me, laden with old books for his evenings, his nights, his long nights of fever and coughing, when he lay shivering in his cold, poorly lighted house, with all his wretched clothes piled on his bed. But he liked above all things to read at my house, sitting in the window-recess of the room where I was working, with the window open on the fields and the Seine.

"I can understand better here," he used to say. Sometimes I assisted him to understand, for, in obedience to a sort of superstition, an ambition of his mind, he selected deep reading, Montaigne, La Bruyère. One of Balzac's or Dickens's novels amused him too much, nor did it make him so proud as the slow deciphering of some classic work. In his intervals of repose I led him to talk about his life, about the condition of the working class, of which he had a very clear perception, far above his years and his occupation. He was

quick to see the painful or comical side of things, the grandeur of certain incidents in factory life. For instance, the first trial of the machine which I describe in *Jack* is one of his reminiscences as an apprentice. The thing that interested me above all else was the awakening, the rounding out of that intellect, like a far-off memory which came back to his mind more and more vividly under the spur of books and our pleasant chats. A change took place even in the physical being, invigorated by the intellectual effort. Unfortunately, life was soon to part us. And while I returned to Paris for the winter, Raoul, resuming his tools, obtained employment in the shops of the Lyon railway. I saw him two or three times in six months; each time thinner and more changed, in despair at the feeling that he was much too weak for his trade. "Very well — leave it. Let us look for something else." But he chose to struggle on, fearing to distress his mother and touched in his manly pride. And I dared not insist, not realizing how deep-seated his disease was, and dreading above all things to take that poor mechanic out of his proper station, to make a *raté*[1] of him, in the name of romance.

Time passed. One day I received a pitiful little note in a trembling hand: "Ill, at La Charité, hall of Saint-Jean de Dieu." And there I found him, lying on a litter, because the winter which was just closing had been very severe and there was no unoccupied bed in that hall, which was set aside for consumptives. Raoul would have one

[1] Literally, one who has missed fire.

when death made the first vacancy. He seemed to me very ill, his eyes were so hollow and his voice so hoarse, and, more than all else, his imagination was so impressed by his sad surroundings, the groans, the racking coughs, the prayer of the nun in attendance at nightfall, and the chaplain, in red slippers, attending those patients whose lives were despaired of. He was afraid that he should die there. I did my utmost to encourage him, but was greatly surprised that his mother had not taken him home to nurse him. "I was the one who objected," said the poor victim. "They are getting on in the world; they are building a new house; I should have been in their way." And, as if in reply to the reproach in my eyes, he added: "Oh! mamma is very good. She writes to me and comes to see me." I am convinced that he was lying; his evident destitution, the plain hospital accommodations, without the slightest delicacy, not even an orange, savored of friendlessness. It occurred to me, when I found him so lonely and unhappy, to induce him to write down what he saw, what he underwent there, convinced that in that way it would make a deeper impression on his mind. And then, who could say? Perhaps it might become a source of income to that proud creature, whom it was so hard to induce to accept a little money. At my first word, the sick man sat up, clinging with both hands to the wooden handles hanging at the head of the bed.

"Really, do you really mean it? do you think that I could write?"

"I am sure of it."

As it turned out I did not find ten words to change in the four articles Raoul sent me from the hospital. Their tone was simple and sincere, with a painful air of reality well suited to their title: LIFE IN THE HOSPITAL. Those persons who happened to read those brief pages in an ephemeral medical sheet, the *Journal d'Enghien*, never could have suspected that they were written on a hospital cot, and with such a painful effort, such feverish excitement. And how delighted he was, the fine fellow, when I carried him the few louis produced by his writings! He would not believe in his good fortune, he turned them over and over on the counterpane in front of him, while curious faces from the neighboring beds leaned forward toward that unfamiliar chink of gold. From that day the hospital was beautiful in his eyes, because he made it his study. He left it soon after, in a burst of youthful vigor; but the interns who attended him did not conceal from me the gravity of his condition. The wound still existed, ready to reopen, incurable, especially if the poor fellow should resume the hard trade of iron-worker and machinist. Thereupon I remembered that when I was of the same age, and my health seriously impaired, a stay of a few months in Algiers was of the greatest benefit to me. I applied to the prefect of Algiers, whom I knew slightly, asking him to give Raoul employment. M. Le Myre de Vilers, now the representative of France at Madagascar, probably has forgotten the incident long ago, but I have not

forgotten with what promptness and good will, which doubled the value of the service, he answered my letter and offered me for my friend a fifteen-hundred-franc clerkship in the land-registry office; five hours' work a day, work that was not fatiguing, in the loveliest country on earth, with a stage-setting of green trees and blue water before his eyes.

That departure, that long journey, were genuine enchantment to Raoul, coupled with the thought that he need never return to the workshop, that he would have black hands no more and could earn his daily bread without killing himself. In the family in which I live I am surrounded by kindly creatures with great, noble hearts whom that boy's misfortunes had conquered; and they clubbed together to provide for his comfort. "I will pay for the journey," said the old grandmamma. Another undertook to provide the linen, another the clothes, for he must leave the blue blouse and overalls at the factory. Raoul accepted everything, now that he had a place, and the certainty of paying his debts. Think of it! Fifteen hundred francs a year? And then he would write, he would send me articles. He planned many other joys beside, of which he talked to me on the evening that we bade each other adieu: he meant to send for his mother, to have her come and lead a happy respectable life with him. Others had had her long enough; now it was his turn. In his new clothes, which became him well, his eyes sparkling and his face intelligent and handsome once more, while he

talked to me in that strain he was no longer the poor, disinherited wretch, but a comrade, one of my comrades who was about to leave me — and whom I was never to see again.

He wrote to me often from Algiers. — "I am dreaming, I am dreaming. It seems to me that I am in heaven." — He lived in a suburb, separated from the sea by a forest of orange trees, near the house of a painter, a friend of mine, to whom I had given him letters, as well as to Charles Jourdan, who lost no time in throwing open his house at Montriant, with unreserved hospitality, to the poor exile. His office work took but little of his time and gave him leisure to continue his education by a course of reading which I had marked out for him. But we had taken hold too late to rescue him from his miserable fate. He had suffered so much and so early in life: the wounds of infancy grew with the man. "I have just had a good shaking-up," Raoul wrote me on June 18, 1870, "but thanks to energetic treatment I am on my feet again, weak, very weak, to be sure, and obliged to count my steps when I walk. During the fortnight of convalescence I have just passed through, without leaving the house, my imagination took many walks with you in the forest, and we talked a deal together in the great studio. My head was too weak for reading and I was lying and dreaming, a little lonely and depressed, when Charles Jourdan, the kind-hearted giant, came in a *bourricot* to fetch me, and took me away to a house which would be very dear to me if there were no such place as

Champrosay. The air at Montriant is so pure, the view so lovely, the silence so profound that I feel as if I were born again. And what a charming fellow Jourdan is, so full of heartiness and youthful vigor! His study is provided with a great library, and I pass my days turning over the leaves here and there as I used to do with you. He also dictates to me his articles for the *Siècle* and the *Histoire.* To-day we have been scoring the general councils." His tone was cheerful enough, but one could detect genuine fatigue, and toward the end the long, straight handwriting wavers, and the ink changes color; he was obliged to stop and rest several times before finishing it.

Then came the war and the siege. I heard nothing more from him and I forgot him. Who among us, during those five months, thought of anything save the country? As soon as the gates of Paris were opened, in the flood of letters which overflowed my table there was one from a physician in Algiers, informing me that Raoul was very ill and asking for information as to his mother; it would be charitable to him to let him know something about her. Why did the mother, after she was told of his condition, still refrain from giving any sign of life so far as her child was concerned? I have never known. But, on February 9th, she received from Charles Jourdan these indignant lines; "Madame, your son is at the hospital. He is dying. In pity's name send a word in your handwriting to the child whom you will never see again."

A short time after, the sad news reached me:

"Raoul died at the civil hospital in Algiers on the 13th of February last, after a long and painful death agony. Until the last he begged for the caress which his mother refused him. 'I am suffering terribly,' he said to me, 'A word from my mother would allay my suffering, I am sure.'—That word did not come, was not sent. I tell you, that woman has treated her son cruelly, pitilessly. Raoul adored his mother; and yet, on his deathbed, he pronounced a terrible sentence upon her: 'I can no longer esteem her either as mother or woman; but my whole heart, on the point of ceasing to beat, is filled with her; I forgive her the wrong she has done me.'—Raoul talked to me a long while about you before he died. In the midst of his melancholy life of suffering and privations, he was surprised to find one pleasant, cheerful memory.—'Say to him that, as I am leaving this world, I most regret losing him and his dear wife.'—I had become very intimate with the unhappy invalid whom you sent to us. I live in a great expanse of open country, inundated with flowers and sunlight; I wished Raoul to look upon it as his usual place of resort, but the sweet-natured, excellent youth was always afraid of being a trouble. Toward the last I begged him to come to my house to be taken care of. He refused and entered the hospital, on the pretext that he would receive better care there. The truth is that the poor fellow felt that his end was near and did not wish to subject a friend to the sad spectacle of his death."

So much of my material real life furnished me. For a long time I saw in this story nothing more than one of the innumerable external afflictions which alternate with our own afflictions. It had taken place too near me for my novelist's glance; the study of humanity was lost sight of in my personal sorrow. One day at Champrosay, as I sat with Gustave Droz on a fallen tree, in the melancholy atmosphere of the woods in autumn, I described Raoul's wretched existence to him, only a few steps from the red-brick hovel in which his hours of illness and friendlessness had worn themselves away.

"What a fine subject for a book!" said Droz, deeply moved.

That very day, laying aside the *Nabob*, upon which I was at work, I started off on this new scent with feverish haste, with that quivering at the ends of my fingers which seizes me at the beginning and the end of all my books. On comparing Raoul's story and the novel of *Jack*, it is easy to distinguish what is true from what is invented, or at least — for I invent but little — from what came to me from other sources. Raoul did not live at Indret, he was not a stoker. He has often told me, however, that, during his apprenticeship at Havre, the neighborhood of the sea, the air of travel, with the shouts of the sailors and the ringing of hammers in the refitting dock, sometimes made him long to go to sea, to accompany in its journey around the world one of the mighty machines made by the firm of Mazeline.

The whole episode of Indret is imaginary. I needed a great centre of the iron-working industry; I hesitated between Creuzot and Indret. I finally decided in favor of the latter because of the river life, the Loire and the Port of Saint-Nazaire. It occasioned a journey and many short trips during the summer of 1874. Taking my little Jack thither, I set about becoming familiar with the atmosphere, the class of people among whom his life was to be passed. I spent many long hours on the island of Indret, walked through the enormous shops during working hours and in the more impressive periods of repose. I saw the Roudics' house with its little garden; I went up and down the Loire, from Saint-Nazaire to Nantes, on a boat which rolled and seemed tipsy like its old rower, who was much surprised that I had not preferred to take the Basse-Indre railway, or the Paimbœuf steamer. And the harbor, the transatlantic liners, the engine-rooms, which I inspected in detail, furnished me with the real notes for my study.

In these excursions I was almost always accompanied by my wife and my little boy — I had but one at that time, a pretty little urchin with tawny curls, displaying his ingenuous wonder amid these varied surroundings. When the trip was too rough for them, the mother and child waited for me in a little inn at Piriac, a genuine Breton inn, square and white like a die on the shore of the vast ocean, with its great chamber with rustic beds, one of which shut up like a wardrobe in the roughly whitewashed wall, the mantel adorned with sponges

and sea-horses as at the Roudics', two little windows secured by the transverse bar familiar in the coast provinces, one looking on the jetty and the infinite expanse of the sea, the other revealing orchards, a corner of the church and cemetery, with the black crosses, crowded together and toppling over, as if the rolling of the waves near by and the wind from the offing shook even the graves of the coast population. Below us was the common-room, a little noisy on Sunday evenings, where they sung old provincial airs whose echo can be found in my book. Sometimes, when the handsome brigadier Mangin was there — yes, brigadier Mangin, I have changed neither his name nor his rank — our host allowed them to move the benches out of the way and to dance "to mouth music." Thither came, with their wives, fishermen and sailors who were friends of ours and took us in their skiffs to breakfast on Île Dumet, or on some rock out at sea. They knew that the big waves no longer had any terrors for my little Parisian or his mamma; and one of them, an old whaler, told us that, seeing monsieur, madame, and the little boy always travelling together reminded him — with due respect — of three "spouters" in the North Sea who always swam in company, father, mother, and child.

On all our excursions we talked of nothing but Jack. He was so completely a part of our lives that to-day, when I think of that corner of Bretagne, it seems to me that my poor Raoul was with us there. On my return to Paris I went to work at

once. I had no notes as to the life of Parisian workingmen. I knew naught of it beyond what the street has to tell of misery, debauchery and fighting; but what of the factory, the wine-shops, the low taverns on the shore of the lake at Saint-Mandé, where I photographed Bélisaire's wedding-party, the dust of the Buttes-Chaumont, where I idled away divers Sunday afternoons, drinking thin beer and watching the kites ascend? As for the hospital, which occupies so large and so sad a place in the life of the common people, with that I was familiar; I had made long visits there during Raoul's illness, to say nothing of the information in his articles. But as the Goncourts had described La Charité exhaustively and definitively in *Sœur Philomène*, I could not go over the same ground. So I have barely touched upon it, and only in short passages.

But what served me best in depicting the people of the faubourgs, in the third part of *Jack*, were my memories of the siege and of the National Guard, the battalion of workmen with whom I patrolled Paris and the suburbs for four months, sleeping on the damp floors of the barracks, on the straw in ox-wagons, and who taught me to love the common people even in their vices, born of poverty and ignorance. The Bélisaire of my book — his true name was Offehmer — was with me in the *Sixth* of the *Eighty-Seventh;* and I can see him now, with his huge, deformed feet, breaking the rank by his limping, always the last man in the battalion on the interminable Rue de Charenton.

Denis Poulet's book, *Le Sublime*, which Zola's fine novel has since made popular, was also of great assistance to me, being full of typical expressions, of a slang peculiar to certain trades, just as I found in Turgan's *Manuel Roret* and *Les Grandes Usines* the technical details of the interior of the workshops, all new to me. Such are the foundations of a novel, the preparation, as gradual as possible, but compact and thorough, which are to furnish the author with the plot, the style, the real prestige of the work. And to think that some people insist upon asking you two months after you have published a new book: "When may we look for the next book? — Come, lazybones!"

The *ratés* and their environment cost me much less labor and investigation. I had only to look behind me through my twenty-five years in Paris. The prosy Dargenton exists as I have described him, with his vast forehead, his imaginary paroxysms, his egotism, the blind and savage egotisim of a powerless Buddha. Not one of his "cruel remarks" was invented; I culled them from his fruitful lips as they blossomed there; and his faith in his genius is so profound that, if he has seen himself painted at full length in my book, as black and solemn and dismal as a country bailiff, he must have smiled disdainfully and said: "That's envy!" — Ten copies of Labassindre can be seen in a well known café on the boulevard, during the summer, when the mullets are idle. — Hirsch is a more specialized type; twenty years ago I used every day to see that *raté* of medicine, slovenly in his

person, cracked-brained, with a phial of ammonia protruding from the pocket of his ample nankeen waistcoat, perfectly possessed to attend and dose the sick without a diploma. He always had some victim in hand, studying the effect upon him of strange and dangerous drugs; then, in default of patients, he doctored himself and died, at the hospital at Bordeaux, as the result of taking his own remedies. Moronval the mulatto is also a real person; he had a share in the management of the *Revue Coloniale*, and was in the Chamber of Deputies for some time after 1870. When I knew him, he occupied a little house with a garden at Batignolles and lived with some half-dozen little negroes forwarded to him from Port-au-Prince and Tahiti, who had been brought up together and acted as his servants, going to market and blacking boots while explaining the *Epitome*.

I have retained, practically intact, the principal character of the real living drama, the main features of his life and his cruel death. The mother, whom I never knew, I have represented as I made her out to be from what her child told me. Also true and closely resembling the truth is worthy Doctor Rivals, a hero, a saint, who has been travelling for thirty years the paths familiar to Jack and his biographer. For fear of distressing him, of causing embarassment to his great modesty, I refrain from giving here his name, which a whole population of peasants has blessed for two generations; I beg his forgiveness for having, in the moral of my story, mingled a gloomy drama, drawn from other sources,

with his noble, straightforward, upright existence.[1] I had almost forgotten two other witnesses of Raoul's great destitution: the wife of the keeper who still occupies the humble house in the forest, where the poor little fellow more than once found a place at table and by the fire, and old Salé, to whom I have left her true name, the hooked-nose peasant, the terror of the abandoned child, who used to dream of her at night in the hospital. I have a weakness for sometimes retaining the real names of my models, imagining that a change of name impairs the completeness of creations which are almost always reminiscences of life, of exhausting, haunting visions, not to be appeased until I place them in my work, as like as possible.

All these foundation stones firmly in place, my characters ready for action, my chapters outlined, I set to work. It was in the spacious study, lighted by two broad, high windows, of the Palais Lamoignon. Read the first pages of the chapter entitled *Jack en Ménage*, and you will obtain the general view of workingmen's houses, of zinc roofs, of tall factory chimneys supported by long iron cables, which my eyes, when they looked up from the paper, saw through the streaming window-panes and the haze of Parisian days. At night, all the windows crowded closely together on every floor of those towering façades were brightly lighted, outlining the

[1] He is dead to-day; his name was Doctor Rivals, and his bust still adorns the pretty green square of the village of Draveil. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

figures of brave-hearted toilers, leaning over their work far into the night, especially about the first of the year, when that toy-makers' quarter supplies material for the street booths and shop-windows. But the best pages were written at Champrosay, where we arrived with the first lilacs for a sojourn in the country often prolonged till the snow flew.

Our most carefully closed and guarded houses in Paris are open to too many distractions and unexpected incidents. There is the friend who brings you his cares or his joys, the morning newspaper with exciting news, the unblushing bore who forces his way by the servants, and the burdens of society, the dinners, the first nights, from which the observer, the painter of modern manners, has no right to absent himself. In the country there is plenty of space, the air is pure, the days long, and being able to dispose of his person and his time as he pleases, one has, above all else, the sense of security due to that independent life, the comforting consciousness of being quite alone with one's idea. There is a sort of intoxication of thought and of work. I never felt it more clearly than when I was writing *Jack*. Those days of frenzied production left delightful memories behind. Long before daylight I was installed at my unpainted table, two steps from my bed, in the dressing-room. I wrote by lamp-light, under a window in the sloping-roof, still cold and wet with dew, which reminded me of the misery of my early years. Beasts of night crept over the roof, scratching the tiles, an owl shrieked, cattle lowed in the straw of a shed close

by; and without glancing at the clock which ticked in front of my pen, without raising my eyes to look at the pale rays of dawn, I knew the time by the crowing of the cocks, by the bustle in a neighboring farmhouse, the tramping of wooden shoes, the jangling of the iron hoops on pails that were being filled with water for the cattle, hoarse voices calling to one another in the keen air of daybreak, with shouts and screaming and the heavy flapping of wings. Then the sleepy tramp of bands of workmen passing on the road; and a little later a swarm of children hurrying toward the school a league away, with the whirring noise of a covey of partridges.

The fact that spurred me on and gave intense interest to that terrible, breathless task was this: in the month of June, and long before I had finished my book, the *Moniteur*, conducted by Paul Dalloz, began to publish it. I have the habit, which may seem at variance with my slow and conscientious method of working, of turning over the chapters to the newspapers as fast as they are finished. I am the gainer by it, in that I am obliged to part from my work, without yielding to that tyrannical craving for perfection which leads authors to go back and remodel the same page ten, yes, twenty times. I know some who wear themselves out in that way, consume their strength to no purpose for years on a single work, paralyze their real faculties, and finally produce what I call "deaf men's literature," whose beauties and refinements are appreciated by none but themselves.

I am also the gainer in that I put the spurs to my natural indolence, that inherited capacity for idling which makes long-continued attention and reflection distasteful, its effect being doubled in my case by a disgusting faculty of analysis and criticism. Once in the water, one must swim; and that is why I resolutely throw myself in. But what feverish excitement, what panics; and the fear of falling ill, and the agony of feeling that that serial with its giant strides is always close upon one's heels!

Jack was finished late in October. I had taken nearly a year to write it; it is by far the longest and the most rapidly done of all my books. So it was that it left me in such a state of exhaustion that I went with my two dear travelling companions to recuperate in the genial sunshine of the Mediterranean, among the violets of Bordighera. There I passed long days of genuine cerebral convalescence, with the silences, the absorbed contemplations of nature, the blissful inspiration of pure, life-giving air which follow a serious illness. On my return *Jack* appeared with the imprint of Dentu, in two thick volumes, but did not have so large a sale as *Fromont*. A story in two volumes is long and dear according to our French ideas. — "A little too much paper, my son," said my great Flaubert, to whom the book is dedicated, with his kindly smile. I was also blamed for having dwelt too much on the poor martyr's sufferings. George Sand wrote me that her heart was so oppressed by reading the book, that "for three days she was unable to

work." The impression must have been profound indeed to interrupt that noble toil, always undaunted and imperturbable.

Well, yes! it is a cruel book, a bitter book, a dismal book. But what is it compared with the *real existence* I have described?

XIV.

ÎLE DES MOINEAUX. — A MEETING ON THE SEINE.

IN those days I had no rheumatism, and, six months in the year, I worked in my boat. Ten leagues above Paris there is a pretty bit of the Seine, of the true provincial Seine, limpid and rustic, invaded by reeds, irises, water-lilies, freighted with tufts of grass and roots on which the wagtails, tired of flying, float downward with the current. On the slopes on either bank are fields of grain and vineyards; here and there a green island, the Île des Paveurs, and the Île des Moineaux, a tiny affair, a veritable bouquet of brambles and riotous branches, which was my favorite port. I would pull my yawl in among the reeds, and when the silky rustling of the long stalks had ceased and my wall had closed in behind me, a little round harbor with water as clear as crystal, in the shadow of an old willow, became my study, and two oars, crossed, my desk![1] I loved that odor of the river, the buzzing of insects among the reeds, the murmur of the long leaves quivering in the wind, all that mysterious, infinite movement which the silence of man arouses in nature. What happiness that

[1] This spot is described in *The Little Parish Church.*

work." The impression must have been profound indeed to interrupt that noble toil, always undaunted and imperturbable.

Well, yes! it is a cruel book, a bitter book, a dismal book. But what is it compared with the *real existence* I have described?

Every one knows Gautier's opinion concerning "the most disagreeable of all noises." Leconte de Lisle and Banville shared it. As soon as a piano is opened Goncourt turns up his nose. Zola has a vague remembrance of having played something in his youth; he has no idea now what it was. The good Flaubert, to be sure, claimed to be a great lover of music, but he did it to please Tourgueneff, who, in reality, never cared for any other music than that which he heard at the Viardots. For my part I love all kinds to distraction, the scientific and the simple, Beethoven, Glück and Chopin, Saint-Saëns, the *bamboula*, Gounod's *Faust* and Berlioz', popular ballads, street-organs, the tambourine, even the church-bells. Music that dances and music that dreams, all kinds appeal to me and move me. The melodies of Wagner lay hold of me, subdue me, hypnotize me like the sea, and the zigzag movements of the Hungarians' fiddle-bows kept me from seeing the Exposition. Whenever those infernal violins seized me as I passed, it was impossible for me to go on. I must needs sit until evening in front of a glass of Hungarian wine, with a tight feeling at my throat, my eyes beyond my control, my whole body shaken by the nervous thrumming of the dulcimer.

That musician suddenly appearing on my island finished me. His name was Léon Pillaut. He had a mind and ideas of his own, a very pretty wit; we took to each other at once. As we had both renounced almost the same notions, our paradoxes made common cause. From that day my island

was as much his as mine; and as his boat, a flat-bottomed Norwegian, rolled horribly, he fell into the habit of coming into mine to talk music. His book: *Instruments et Musiciens*, which procured his appointment as professor at the Conservatoire, was already buzzing in his head and he told me about it. He and I lived that book together.

I find between his lines the echo of our unreserved chats, just as I used to watch the Seine sparkle between the reeds. Pillaut told me some absolutely novel things concerning his art. Endowed with musical talent, and brought up in the country, his delicate ear has retained and noted all the sounds of nature; he hears as a landscape painter sees. In his ears every sound of wings has its peculiar note. The confused buzzings of insects, the rustling of autumn leaves, the rippling of streams over pebbles, the wind, the rain, the sound of voices in the distance, the rumbling of trains, wheels creaking in the ruts — all these details of life in the country you will find in his book. And many other things beside, ingenious criticisms, an attractive display of the erudition of a man with a hobby, the poetical biography of the orchestra and all its instruments, from the *viole d'amour* to the Saxe trumpet, told by him for the first time. We talked about it under our willow, or in a water-side inn, drinking muddy white wine of the new vintage, dissecting a herring on the corner of a broken plate, among quarrymen and boatmen; we talked about it as we rowed on the Seine and explored the little streams that flow into it.

Oh! our rows upon the Orge, a pretty, changing stream, all black with shadow and edged with fragrant lianes, like a brook in Oceanica! We rowed on and on, not knowing whither. At times we passed between worldly lawns, where a white peacock flaunted his tail amid a bouquet of light dresses. A picture by Nittis. In the background the château, gayly decked out with its old-fashioned flower-beds, retreated beneath the high, luxuriant foliage, embellished by melodious trills, by the warbling of rich men's birds. Farther on we found the wild flowers of an island, the tangled branches, the grizzly, gnarled willows, or perhaps an old mill, tall as a fortress, with its moss-grown bridge, its high walls irregularly pierced with holes, and on the roof, covered with pigeons and Guinea fowl, a constant whirring of wings which the bulky machine seemed to set in motion. And then the floating down with the current, singing the simple old melodies of nature! The screams of the peacocks echoed over the bare lawns; in the middle of a pasture we could see the shepherd with his little wagon, collecting his sheep to drive them to the fold. We started up the kingfisher, the blue bird of the small streams; we stooped at the mouth of the Orge, to pass under the arch of the bridge, and the Seine, as it suddenly appeared in the twilight haze, gave us the impression of the open sea.

Among all our delightful vagabond rambles, one remains especially clear in my memory, a luncheon one autumn day at a waterside tavern. I can see now that chilly morning, the Seine sluggish and

melancholy, the countryside lovely in its silence, the ruddy folds of a penetrating mist which made us turn up our coat-collars. The tavern was a little below the Coudray dam, a former posting-station, to which the good people of Corbeil go to make merry on Sundays, but which is frequented in winter only by the dam-keepers and the crews of barges and tugs. At that moment the kettle was steaming for the passage of the *chaîne*. God! what a pleasant puff of warmth as we entered! "And with the beef, messieurs? — How would you like a tench *à la casserole?*" — It was perfectly delicious, that tench served on a common earthenware plate, in a small room hung with a paper which offered pleasant suggestions of a bourgeois merry-making. The repast at an end and our pipes lighted, we began to talk of Mozart. It was a typical autumn conversation. Outside, on the inn terrace, I could see through the leafless arbors a swing painted green, a game of *tonneau*, the targets of a shooting gallery, all shivering in the cold wind from the Seine, in the touching melancholy of deserted places of amusement. — "Ah! — a spinet!" said my companion, raising the dusty cover of a long table covered with plates. He tried the instrument, produced some cracked, quavering notes, and until nightfall we drank ourselves blissfully drunk with Mozart.

XV.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — FROMONT AND RISLER.[1]

THE first idea of *Fromont* came into my mind during a general rehearsal of the *Arlésienne* at the Vaudeville theatre. With a magnificent bit of Camarguese scenery for stage-setting, which the gas-jets, arranged in triangles, lighted brightly even to the curtain at the rear, the pastoral unfolded its slow, rhythmic scenes, to the accompaniment of Bizet's charming music, with refrains of old Christmas ballads and old-fashioned marches. Contemplating that impassioned fairy-like spectacle, which fascinated me, Southerner that I am, but which I felt to be too local, too simple in its action, I said to myself that the good people of Paris would soon weary of hearing the talk about grasshoppers, the girls of Arles, the mistral and my mill, that it was time to interest them in a work upon some subject closer to them, a work dealing with their every-day life, its action taking place in their atmosphere; and as I was then living in the Marais, it naturally occurred to me to locate my drama in the midst of the active working life of that business quarter. The partnership idea tempted me; being the son

[1] *Fromont and Risler* was published in 1874; the *Arlésienne* was produced in 1872.

of a manufacturer, I knew the vexations of that commercial collaboration, in which common interests associate in the performance of a never-completed task, sometimes for years, men who differ widely in temperament and education. I was familiar with the jealousies between families, the bitter rivalry of the women, in whom the spirit of caste retains its vigor better and fights more fiercely than in man, and all the tribulations of life under the same roof. At Nîmes, at Lyon, at Paris, I had ten models at hand, all in my own family, and I began to meditate upon a work in which the plot should turn upon the honor of the firm's signature, of the firm itself. Unfortunately, one must introduce an element of passion even on the stage. Adultery engrosses attention with its falsehoods, its excitements, its risks; and it was for that reason that the interest of my study was lessened, diverted, concentrated on Sidonie and her adventures, when the partnership was intended to be its leading theme; but I propose to return to it some day.

The *Arlésienne*, as we know, did not succeed. It was insane to think that, at the heart of the boulevard, in that coquettish corner of the Chaussée d'Antin, right in the path of the fashions and whims of the day, of the changing, bewildering eddy of all Paris, people would be interested in that love-drama, the action of which takes place in a farm-yard, in a Camargue plain, exhaling the fragrance of well-stocked granaries and flowering lavender. It was a gorgeous failure, with the sweetest music imaginable, and silk and velvet

costumes amid opera-comique scenery. I went away discouraged, sick at heart, with the idiotic laughter called forth by the emotional scenes still ringing in my ears; and, without attempting to defend myself in the newspapers, where every one assailed that play with its lack of unexpected incident, that picture, in three tableaux, of manners and adventure of which I alone could know the absolute fidelity to nature, I determined to write no more plays, and I piled up the hostile reviews as a rampart to my determination. *Fromont*, which was all thought out and prepared, almost done to a turn, seemed to me capable of being transformed into a novel. I was obliged thereupon to change the framework of the plot, to rearrange the order and sequence of the sentiments; but nothing is so difficult as this demolition of a work whose pieces fit together, supplement one another and form a perfect mosaic; nothing is so cruel as this voluntary miscarriage of our conceptions when the mind has borne them for a long time, intensely alive and painful. And as the elements of the drama — I mean the drama as I had shaped it in my mind, and not as it was acted later — did duty for the novel, that is how it happens that the plot of *Fromont and Risler* is slightly conventional and romantic, with types of character and environments strictly true to life, copied from nature.

From nature!

I have never had any other system of work. As painters carefully preserve sketch-books in which they jot down silhouettes, poses, an effect

of perspective, a movement of the arm, taken on the wing, so I have been collecting for thirty years a multitude of little note-books, containing observations and thoughts, sometimes comprised in one closely written line, with which to recall a gesture or a tone, to be developed and magnified later as one of the harmonious elements of an important work. In Paris, in the country, travelling, these sheets become black unconsciously, without a thought of the future work that is heaping up there; I sometimes find proper names jotted down which I cannot make up my mind to change, finding in the names a characteristic physiognomy, a striking likeness of the persons who bear them. Some of my books have given rise to a great hue and cry, to much talk about *novels with keys;* the keys have even been published, with lists of illustrious personages, without regard to the fact that, in my other books as well real persons had figured, but unknown persons, lost in the crowd where no one would dream of looking for them.

Is not that the true method of writing novels, that is to say, the story of people who will never have a story? All the characters in *Fromont* have lived or are still living. With old Gardinois I caused pain to a man of whom I am very fond, but I could not suppress that type, the selfish, redoubtable old man, the implacable parvenu, who sometimes said to his assembled children, as he stood on the terrace of his park, embracing with his miser's glance the great buildings of the farm and château: "The thing that consoles me for

having to die is the thought that after I am gone no one of you will be rich enough to keep up the estate." — Planus the cashier was really named Schérer. I knew him in a banking-house on Rue de Londres, where he would stand in front of his well-filled safe, shaking his head and murmuring in his German accent with tragi-comic distress: "Ja, ja, money, much money; put I haf no gonfidence." — Sidonie too exists, and her parents' humble home, and Mère Chèbe's little box set with diamonds in a corner of the Empire commode, the only luxury the poor Chèbe household had seen for a long time. But the true Sidonie is not so black as I have painted her. Scheming, ambitious, dazzled by her new fortune, drunk with dissipation and extravagant toilets, but incapable of adultery in her own home, a detail invented with a special view to effective scenes. — Madame Fromont still polishes her rings with the same conscientious care, down in the provinces; but she will never read the book, for she does not read at all, her fingers are too busy. — Risler is a memory of my childhood. That tall fair-haired factory draughtsman worked for my father. I transformed him from an Alsatian to a Swiss, in order not to introduce into my book sentimental patriotism, the declamation which wins applause so easily. — Delobelle lived near me, and has said to me ten times: "I have no right to abandon the stage." In him, to perfect the type, I summed up all that I knew about actors, their manias, the difficulty they find in recovering their footing in

life when they go off the stage, in maintaining an individuality under so many varying masks. I find among some old notes which I have been looking over to assist me in writing these lines, a "Benediction of the Sea," narrated by an actor, which is really the most extraordinary thing you can imagine. I do not transcribe it, despairing of my ability to do justice to the rolling of eyes and voice, the emotion at an angle of sixty-seven and a half degrees, the puffing, the pose quivering with intense feeling, which accompanied that strange tale, heard in the greenroom of the old Vaudeville. And, here again, in a sketch-book, the amazing attitude of another Delobelle, standing in front of his house which the Prussians had burned, and expressing a genuine feeling of regret by the aid of artificial gestures of the most comical sort; for it is the special privilege of that race, whose study it is to interpret life, to understand everything wrong, and to retain in their eyes the conventional, unshaded perspective of the stage. Thus Delobelle was firmly planted in my mind, but I had not yet rounded him out by his family when I attended, about that time, the funeral of a great actor's daughter; there I saw, in a courtyard on Rue de Bondy, the theatrical world in its entirety, and all the details that I introduced later at the death of little Désirée: the typical *entrées* of the guests, their pump-like action in shaking hands, varied according to the practices of their respective rôles, the tear caught in the corner of the eye and looked at on the end of the glove. I

instantly conceived the idea of giving Delobelle a daughter, and I determined to represent the child as having inherited a trace of her father's extravagance and as having transformed the artistic frenzy into the gentle sentimentality of a woman and a cripple. In view of her infirmity, and by way of contrast, I gave her a fanciful, ornamental trade. At first I made her a doll's dressmaker, so that that humble, disfigured creature might at least be able to satisfy her taste for refinement and elegance, to clothe her dreams, if not herself, in scraps of silk and gold lace. The trade was characteristic of that noisy, humming Marais, whose smoke-begrimed five-story houses, whose venerable escutcheoned mansions shelter the amusement of Paris in course of preparation, scattering bits of fine gold and valuable woods in the dust of their garrets and their iron-bound staircases. Enter those narrow halls, climb those dismal flights of stairs; through the open doors on each landing you will see in the light of the stone lamp, around a meagre fire, women and children working. A bit of wire, a bit of glue, a scrap of gilt paper, of velvet, that is all they need to fashion with their finger-tips, almost without tools, by dexterity and ingenuity alone, in spite of cold and hunger, those trivial articles, "pretty and well made," as the hucksters say when they offer them to you: clowns, dancers, butterflies that flap their wings, marvels for four sous, the toys of the poor made by the poor, wherein the shrewd, kindly taste of that amazing Parisian populace is clearly discernible.

Following my mania for talking about my book aloud when I am constructing it mentally, I spoke one day to André Gill, the painter and designer, who was every inch an artist, of the little Delobelle as I intended to create her; he informed me that in one of Dickens's novels with which I was not familiar, *Our Mutual Friend*, there was precisely the same conception of a young cripple who was a doll's dressmaker, rendered with all the great English novelist's profound tenderness for the lowly, with his magic art of depicting low life. It was a pretext for me to recall how many times I had been compared to Dickens, even long, long before, when I had not read him, before the time when a friend, returning from a trip to England, told me of the resemblance between *David Copperfield* and *Little What's-His-Name.* An author who writes according to his eyes and his conscience has no answer to make to that, unless it be that there are certain mental relationships for which one is not oneself responsible, and that on the day of the grand kneading of men and novelists, nature, in a moment of distraction, may have mixed the dough. I feel in my heart Dickens's love for the deformed and the poor, for the child-life steeped in misery of great cities; like him I had a heart-rending introduction to life, being obliged to earn my living before I was sixteen; therein, I imagine, consists our greatest resemblance. In spite of everything I was disheartened by that conversation with Gill, and, abandoning my doll's dressmaker, I tried to find another trade

for little Delobelle. But such things are not to be invented; and how was I to find a trade so poetically chimerical as that of doll's dressmaker, making possible what I wished to depict: exquisite grace in poverty, smiling dreams within dismal walls, the fingers giving shape to the fanciful flights of longing. Ah! I searched many dark houses that year, climbed many cold stairways with a rail of rope, seeking my ideal environment among the innumerable petty industries. One day, on Rue du Temple, on a leather sign in one of the frames in which, for the convenience of customers, all the industries carried on in a house are inscribed and advertised, I read these words in faded gold letters, which fairly blinded me:

BIRDS AND INSECTS FOR ORNAMENT.

The habit, which I mentioned a moment ago, of talking aloud about my books, is with me one method of working. While explaining my work to others, I make my subject clearer to myself, I saturate myself with it, I experiment upon my auditors to see what passages will make a hit, and the conversation results in surprises and discoveries which I do not forget, thanks to an excellent memory. Woe to the visitor who interrupts me in my fever of creation. I continue pitilessly in his presence, talking instead of writing, tacking together as well as I can, so that they may be intelligible to him, the different portions of my novel, and, heedless of the ennui, the evident wandering of glances which try to avoid a copious improvisa-

tion, I construct my chapter, I develop it in words. In my study at Paris, in the country, in my excursions through the fields or on the river, I have bored in this way many of my friends who had no suspicion of their mute collaboration. But my wife has had more to endure than any other of these repetitions of my work, of this turning and re-turning a subject twenty times in succession: "What do you think of killing Sidonie off? — Suppose I should let Risler live? What would Delobelle say or Frantz or Claire under such circumstances?" — That sort of thing from morning till night, every minute in the day, at table, in cabs, on the way to the theatre, on returning home at night, during those long cab drives through silent, sleeping Paris. Ah! ye poor wives of artists! It is true that mine is a consummate artist herself and has taken the deepest interest in everything I have written! Not a page which she has not looked over and retouched, on which she has not sprinkled a little of her lovely gold and azure powder. And so modest, so simple, so little of a literary woman! I had given expression to all these thoughts one day and testified to her untiring, loving collaboration, in the dedication of the *Nabob;* my wife would not allow that dedication to appear, and I printed it in only some ten or twelve copies for my friends, which are very rare now and which I commend to collectors.[1]

[1] "To my devoted, judicious and unwearying collaborator, to my beloved Julia Daudet, I offer, with all the thanks of a grateful and loving heart, this book, which owes so much to her."

My method of work is well known. When all my notes are made, the chapters arranged in order and separated, the characters well defined and living in my mind, I begin to write rapidly, in a round hand. I dash off ideas and incidents, without taking time to revise or even to correct, because the subject hurries me on, overflows upon me, both details and characters. When one page is covered I pass it to my collaborator; then I look it over again and finally recopy it, with such delight! The delight of a schoolboy who has finished his task, retouching certain passages, perfecting, polishing: that is the most enjoyable stage of the work. *Fromont* was written thus in one of the oldest mansions in the Marais, where my study, with its enormous windows, looked out upon the foliage, the blackened trellises of the garden. But outside of that zone of tranquillity and of chirping birds was the busy life of the faubourgs, the columns of smoke from the factories, the rumbling of the vans; and I can still hear on the pavement of a neighboring courtyard the jolting of a wheelbarrow which, when the time for New Year's gifts approached, went about delivering toy drums from seven o'clock in the evening far into the night. There is nothing so healthy, so inspiring as to work in the very atmosphere of your subject, in the environment in which you can feel your characters moving. The going to and from the workshops, the factory-bells passed across my pages at stated hours. Not the slightest effort was required to find the local color, the ambient atmosphere, for I was invaded by it.

The whole quarter assisted me, carried me along, worked for me. At the two ends of the enormous room were my long table and my wife's little desk, and, running with the sheets from one to the other, my oldest boy, now a medical student, then a little urchin with thick flaxen curls falling over his little pinafore, black with the ink of his first scrawl. It is one of the pleasantest memories of my life as an author.

Sometimes I found it necessary to go to some special locality for greater precision of detail. Thereupon the whole family would set out in search of the required impression. Risler and Sigismond's dinner after the crash I myself ate, with my wife and son, at the Palais Royal, at the hour when the band was playing, when the straw chairs arranged in a circle, the bored attitudes of the people listening, even the dripping of the fountain in the dust at the close of a hot day, exhale a peculiar atmosphere of melancholy: the emptiness, the provincialism of Paris in summer. I felt permeated with that atmosphere; and, full of my subject, I was suddenly profoundly affected by that commonplace military music and fancied it playing a subdued accompaniment to the melancholy conversation of my two worthy friends. Risler's death necessitated another longer expedition; I remembered Poulet-Malassis the publisher's little house near the fortifications, and I had installed Planus there, facing the green slopes with yellow flowers, trodden and stripped by the Sunday promenaders. I must needs inspect the region once more, follow

Risler's trail from the house door to the dark archway where he was to hang himself, near those barracks from which the view of Paris resembles the view of it from the suburbs — a smoky, compact mass of cupolas, steeples and roofs, with suggestions of a vast harbor where chimneys represent the masts. After that I had frames for all my chapters. I had nothing more to do but write, and under those circumstances, the drama being figured, so to speak, illustrated by my memories and my walks, the work was half done.

Fromont and Risler appeared as a serial in the *Bien Public*, and during its publication I was conscious for the first time of the serious interest of the multitude in my work. Claire and Désirée had friends; I was blamed for Risler's death; I received letters interceding for the little deformed girl. Life contains nothing more charming than that upspringing of popularity, that first communication between the author and the reader.

The book was published by Charpentier, who was then just establishing himself on Quai du Louvre, in cheerful quarters flooded with sunlight, in that delightful, hospitable shop which has become a veritable rendezvous for literary folk. Upon leaving there one autumn-like evening late in April, as I stood among the rows of plants arranged for the following day's market, gazing at the Seine streaked with bands of light from lanterns, I had a very distinct vision of Désirée Delobelle's death.

The large sale of my book surprised me greatly. I had theretofore been admitted to fellowship in a

small artistic group, but had never dreamed of great popularity, and I remember my happy surprise on being informed that a second edition was necessary, when, a few days after my book appeared, I went in fear and trembling to make inquiries as to its fortune.

Soon fresh impressions began to succeed one another rapidly, then there were orders for translations for Italy, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Denmark; England also joined the ranks, but less promptly. That is the country where I have found it most difficult to gain a footing, with all my taste for homely things, which, it would seem, should prove more attractive there than elsewhere.

One more detail, in conclusion.

In those days we used to have, at Gustave Flaubert's, Sunday reunions, which gradually made of a small group of writers, united in their respect and passionate love for letters, a group of warm friends. It was on Rue Murillo, in a suite of small rooms overlooking the carefully-tended shrubbery, the artificial ruins of Parc Monceau. Within, there was the silence of a private house looking on a park, and an unconstrained artistic conversation which afforded me the keenest enjoyment. We four, or five when Tourgueneff had not the gout, always dined together once a month — the dinner was jocosely called "the dinner of authors who have been hissed" — and roundly cursed the prevailing indifference to literature and the alarm of the public at every new revelation. The fact is that

not one of us had the good luck to please that terrible public.

Flaubert was tormented by the melancholy of past triumphs, drained to the very dregs, even to the reproaches of the critics and the common herd who are forever throwing your first book in your face, and who held up *Madame Bovary* as a glorious obstacle to the success of *Salammbô* and the *Éducation Sentimentale.* Goncourt seemed fatigued, sick at heart, as the result of a great mental effort of which a whole new generation of novelists would reap the advantage, and which would, at all events he so believed, leave him, the originator, almost unknown. Suddenly I found myself the only one in the party who felt popularity coming his way to the tune of several thousand copies, and I was embarrassed, almost ashamed, in presence of authors of such talent. Every Sunday, when I arrived, they questioned me: "How about new editions? what's the number now?" Every time I had to own up to new impressions; really I no longer knew what to do with myself and my success. "We others shall never sell," said Zola, without envy but with a touch of sadness.

That was twelve years ago. To-day his novels sell by hundreds of editions. Goncourt's are in every hand, and I smile when I remember that heart-rending resigned lament: "We others shall never sell!"

Ivan Turgénieff.

Braquehais & Cie Paris

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XVI.

TURGÉNIEFF.

IT was ten or twelve years ago at Gustave Flaubert's on Rue Murillo. Small, daintily furnished rooms, upholstered in Algerian stuffs, and looking on Parc Monceau, the prim, aristocratic garden which hung blinds of verdure at the windows. We met there every Sunday, five or six of us, always the same, upon a most delightfully intimate footing. No admittance for mutes and bores.

One Sunday, when I went as usual to join the old Master and our friends, Flaubert waylaid me at the door.

"You don't know Turgénieff? He is here."

And without awaiting my reply, he pushed me into the salon. A tall old man with snow-white beard rose, as I entered, from the couch on which he was stretched out, uncurling on the pile of cushions the rings of his boa constrictor's body with its immense, astonished eyes.

We Frenchmen live in extraordinary ignorance of all foreign literature. Our minds are as domestic as our limbs, and, because of our horror of travelling, we read no more than we establish colonies when we are exiled. It so happened that I knew Turgénieff's work through and through. I had read with great emotion the *Memoirs of a*

Russian Nobleman, and that book, which fell into my hands by chance, had led me on to an acquaintance with the others. We were bound together, without knowing each other, by our mutual love for grain-fields, for underbrush, for nature generally — a twin-like comprehension of its development.

In general, descriptive writers have only eyes and content themselves with painting. Turgénieff has the sense of smell and hearing. All his senses have doors opening into one another. He is full of the fragrance of the country, of the sound of rippling water, of cloudless skies, and allows his nerves to be soothed by the orchestra of his sensations without becoming a partisan of any school.

Does not such music reach every ear? Those who live in cities, whose ears are deafened in childhood by the great city's roar, will never detect it; they will not hear the voices that speak in the silence, that is no silence, of the woods, when nature deems itself alone, and man, by holding his peace, has caused his presence to be forgotten. Do you remember the fall of an oar on the bottom of a boat, which you heard on one of Fenimore Cooper's lakes? The boat is miles away, you cannot see it; but the size of the forest is magnified by that far-off noise echoing over the sleeping water, and you feel the thrill of solitude.

It was the Russian steppes that brought Turgénieff's senses and heart to maturity. Man becomes kind-hearted by dint of listening to nature, and they who love it do not lose their interest in mankind. Hence that sympathetic gentleness, sad

as one of the Russian peasants' ballads, which sob through the Slav novelist's books. It is the human sigh of which the Creole song speaks, the safety-valve that prevents the world from bursting: "Si pas té gagné, soupi n'en mouné, mouné t'a touffé." And that sigh, repeated again and again, makes the *Memoirs of a Russian Nobleman* another *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, minus the declamation and the shrieks.

I knew all this when I met Turgénieff. For a long time he had been enthroned in my Olympus, on an ivory chair, among my gods. But, far from having a suspicion of his presence in Paris, I had never asked whether he was dead or alive. Imagine my amazement, therefore, when I suddenly found myself face to face with him, in a Parisian salon, on the third floor of a house on Parc Monceau.

I laughingly told him the truth and expressed my admiration for him. I told him that I had read him in the forest of Sénart. There I had found his soul, and the pleasant memories of the scenery and of his books were so completely blended in my mind that such an one of his novels had retained in my thoughts the coloring of a little field of pink heather, already withered by the approach of autumn.

Turgénieff was greatly surprised.

"What! you have read me?"

And he gave me some details concerning the small sale of his books and the obscurity of his name in France. Hetzel published for him as an act of charity. His popularity had not crossed the frontier. It was distressing to him to pass his life

unknown to a country of which he was very fond, and he confessed his disappointment, a little sadly, but without bitterness. On the other hand, our disasters in 1870 had drawn him nearer to France, he could not make up his mind to leave it. Before the war he had passed his summers at Baden, now he no longer went thither but was content with Bougival and the banks of the Seine.

As it happened there was no one else at Flaubert's that Sunday, and our tête-à-tête was prolonged. I questioned him as to his method of work and was surprised to find that he did not make his own translations, for he spoke very pure French, possibly a little slowly because of the subtlety of his mind.

He confessed to me that the Academy and its dictionary froze the blood in his veins. He turned the leaves of that formidable dictionary with fear and trembling, as if it were a codification of the laws governing the use of words, and of the penalties for audacious violations thereof. He came away from his investigations with his conscience stuffed with literary scruples which destroyed his vein and disgusted him with the venture of writing French. I remember that in a novel he was then writing he thought that he could not risk "*ses yeux pâles*," for fear of the Forty and of their definition of the phrase.

It was not the first time that I had come in contact with this same anxiety; I had found it in my friend Mistral, who likewise was fascinated by the dome of the Institute, the burlesque monument

which adorns in the shape of a circular medallion the cover of the Didot publications.

On that subject I said to Turgénieff what I felt in my heart, that the French language is not a dead language, to be written with a dictionary of definitive expressions, classified as in a *Gradus*. For my own part I felt that it was quivering with life and energy, a noble river flowing full between its banks. The river gathers up much rubbish on the way for everything is tossed into it; but let it roll on, it will do its own filtering.

Thereupon, as the day was advancing, Turgénieff said that he was going to meet "the ladies" at the Concert Pasdeloup, and I left the house with him. I was overjoyed to learn that he was fond of music. In France literary men as a rule hold it in horror; painting has invaded everything. Théophile Gautier, Saint-Victor, Hugo, Banville, Goncourt, Zola, Leconte de l'Isle, all are music-haters. So far as my knowledge goes, I am the first who ever confessed aloud his ignorance of colors and his fondness for notes; this peculiarity is due doubtless to my Southern temperament and to my near-sightedness; one sense is highly developed at the expense of another. In Turgénieff's case the taste for music was a part of his Parisian education. He had acquired it in the environment in which he lived.

That environment was an intimate friendship of thirty years' standing with Madame Viardot,[1]

[1] M. Louis Viardot (1800–1883) who married in 1838 Mlle. Pauline Garcia, sister of the famous Malibran, and herself an

Viardot the great singer, Viardot-Garcia, Malibran's sister. A bachelor and without kindred, Turgénieff had lived for years at the family mansion, 50 Rue de Douai. "The ladies" of whom he spoke to me at Flaubert's were Madame Viardot and her daughters, whom he loved as his own children. It was at that hospitable abode that I called upon him.

The house was furnished with refined sumptuousness, with much care for artistic effect and for physical comfort. As I passed through the hall on the ground floor, I saw through an open door a gallery of paintings. Fresh voices, the voices of young girls, reached my ears through the hangings; they alternated with the impassioned contralto of *Orphée*, which filled the hall and went upstairs with me.

On the third floor was a small suite, as luxurious and snug and crowded as a boudoir. Turgénieff had borrowed from his friends their artistic tastes: music from the wife, painting from the husband.

He was lying on a sofa.

I sat beside him, and we at once resumed the conversation begun the other day.

artiste of great merit, was a versatile and accomplished character. He began life as a lawyer, then adopted the profession of journalism. He wrote for many periodicals, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Revue de Paris*, etc., and in 1841 founded with George Sand the *Revue Indépendante*. He was for a time joint director with M. Robert and afterward sole director of the Théâtre des Italiens. He visited many countries with his wife on her tours, wrote interestingly of them and helped to spread knowledge of their literature in France. Translated Cervantes, Nikolai, Gogal, Pouchkine, Turgénieff, etc.

He had been impressed by my remarks and promised to bring to Flaubert's on the following Sunday a novel that was being translated under his eyes. Then he mentioned a book that he proposed to write, *Virgin Soil*, a picture in sombre colors of the new strata rumbling in the depths of Russia, the story of those poor "simplified," whom a pitiful misunderstanding is forcing into the arms of the people. The people do not understand them, mock at them and reject them. And while he was speaking, I reflected that Russia is in truth virgin soil, soil still soft, where the lightest step leaves its mark, a land where everything is new, to be explored and worked. With us on the contrary there is not a deserted road, not a path which the crowd has not trodden hard; and, to mention the field of novel-writing only, Balzac's shadow stands at the end of every avenue.

After that interview we met frequently. Among all the moments that we passed together, there is one Sunday afternoon in spring on Rue Murillo which has remained fixed in my memory, unique and luminous. We had been talking about Goethe, and Turgénieff had said to us: "You do not know him." The following Sunday he brought us *Prometheus*, and the *Satyr*, that Voltairean tale, rebellious and impious, expanded into a dramatic poem. Parc Monceau sent up to us its shouts of children playing, its bright sunshine, the cool air from its freshly watered shrubbery, and we four, Goncourt, Zola, Flaubert and I, deeply moved by that impressive improvisation, listened to the render-

ing of genius by genius. That man, who trembled when his pen was in his hand, had, when he was on his feet, all the audacity of the poet; it was not the lying translation which coagulates and petrifies; Goethe lived and spoke to us.

Often too Turgénieff hunted me out in the depths of the Marais, in the old Henri II. mansion where I lived at that time. He was entertained by the strange spectacle of that court of honor, of that royal abode with its gables and *moucharabies*, overflowing with the petty branches of Parisian commerce, with manufacturers of tops, seltzer water and sugar-plums. One day when he came in, a colossal figure, leaning on Flaubert's arm, my little boy whispered to me: "Why, they're giants!" Giants in very truth, kindly giants, great brains and great hearts in proportion to their chests and shoulders. There was a bond between those two genial natures, the affinity of ingenuous kindliness. It was George Sand who brought them together. Flaubert, hyperbolical, grumbling, Quixotic, with his voice like a bugle-blast, the powerful irony of his observation, the bearing of a Norman of the Conquest, was the virile half of that marriage of minds; but who could have divined in that other colossus, with his eyebrows like bunches of tow and his enormous frame, the woman, the keenly sensitive woman whom Turgénieff has depicted in his books, that nervous, languid, passionate Russian, slothful as an Oriental, tragic as a latent force in revolt? So true is it that in the confusion of the great human manufactory, souls often mistake their proper envelopes,

and we find men's souls in feminine bodies, women's souls in Cyclopean frames.

It was about that time that the suggestion was made of a monthly meeting around a bountifully spread table; it was called the "Flaubert dinner," or the "dinner of authors who have been hissed." Flaubert was admitted by virtue of the failure of his *Candidat*, Zola with *Bouton de Rose*, Goncourt with *Henriette Maréchal*, I with my *Arlésienne*. Girardin tried to insinuate himself into our circle; he was not a literary man, so we rejected him. As for Turgénieff, he gave us his word that he had been hissed in Russia; and as it was a long distance away we did not go there to see.

There could be nothing more delightful than those dinner-parties of friends, where we talked without restraint, with minds alert and elbows on the table-cloth. Like men of experience, we were all gourmands. There were as many different varieties of gluttony as there were temperaments; as many tastes as provinces represented. Flaubert must have Normandy butter and Rouen ducks *à l'étouffade;* Edmond de Goncourt, with his delicate, exotic appetite, ordered sweetmeats flavored with ginger; Zola, shell-fish; Turgénieff smacked his lips over his caviare.

Ah! we were not easily fed, and the Parisian restaurants must remember us. We often changed. At one time we dined at Adolphe and Pelé's, behind the Opéra, at another time on Place de l'Opéra-Comique; then at Voisin's, where the

cellar satisfied all our demands and won the favor of our appetites.

We sat down at seven o'clock, and at two we had not finished. Flaubert and Zola dined in their shirt-sleeves, Turgénieff reclined on the couch; we turned the waiters out of the room — an entirely useless precaution, for Flaubert's roar could be heard from top to bottom of the house. And we talked literature. We always had one of our own books which had just appeared. Flaubert brought his *Tentation de Saint-Antoine* and *Trois Contes*, Goncourt his *Fille Élisa*, Turgénieff the *Living Relics* and *Virgin Soil*, I *Fromont* and *Jack*. We talked with perfect freedom, without flattery, without any agreement for mutual admiration.

I have before me a letter from Turgénieff, in a coarse, foreign, old-fashioned hand, a manuscript hand, which I transcribe at length, for it gives an excellent idea of the tone of sincerity that characterized our relations.

Monday, May 24, '77.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, —

"My reason for not having spoken to you about your book before this was that I wished to do so at length and not to content myself with a few trite phrases. I postpone all that to our next interview, which will take place soon, I trust, for Flaubert is coming back and our dinners will begin anew.

"I confine myself to saying one thing: the *Nabob* is the most remarkable and the most uneven book that you have written. If *Fromont and Risler* be represented by

a straight line, thus ——, the *Nabob* should be represented thus ΛΛΛ, and the highest points of the zigzags cannot be reached by any save a *talent of the first order.*

"I ask your pardon for explaining myself so geometrically.

"I have had a very long and very violent attack of the gout. I went out for the first time only yesterday, and I have the legs and knees of a man of ninety. I very much fear that I have become what the English call a *confirmed invalid.*

"A thousand regards to Madame Daudet; I press your hand most cordially.

"Yours,

"IVAN TURGÉNIEFF."

When we had done with books and the interesting topics of the day, our chat assumed a broader range, we recurred to subjects and ideas that were ever present; we talked of love and of death.

The Russian on his divan held his peace.

"And you, Turgénieff?"

"Oh, as for death, I never think of it. With us, no one has a clear conception of it, it remains in the distance, shrouded in the Slavic mist."

That remark was very eloquent concerning the nature of his race and his own genius. The Slavic mist hovers over all his work, clouds it, makes it quiver, and his conversation too was drowned in it as it were. What he said to us always began painfully, hesitatingly; then suddenly the clouds, traversed by a shaft of light, an incisive word, would vanish. He described his Russia to us, not the historical, familiar Russia of the Beresina, but

a Russia of summer sunshine, of fields of grain, of flowers hatched under the snow; Little Russia, alive with budding plants and the humming of bees. And so, as we must give some habitation to the exotic stories that are told us and frame them in a familiar landscape, Russian life appeared to me, as the result of his descriptions, like the existence of a châtelaine on an Algerian estate surrounded by native villages.

Turgénieff told us of the Russian peasant, of his ingrained taste for alcohol, of the torpid state of his conscience, of his ignorance of liberty. Or else it was some fresher page, a fragment of an idyll, the memory of a miller's daughter, whom he had met in the hunting-field, and with whom he had been in love for some time.

"What shall I give you?" he always asked her.

And the lovely girl would reply with a blush:

"Bring me some soap from the city so that I may perfume my hands, and then you can kiss them as you do to the ladies."

After life and death we talked of diseases, of the slavery of the body dragged along like a ball. What melancholy confessions we hear from men who have passed the fortieth mark! For my part, as rheumatism had not yet begun to devour me, I laughed at my friends, at that poor Turgénieff who suffered tortures with the gout and came limping to our dinners. Later, I lowered my tone.

Alas! the death of which we used always to talk came at last. It took Flaubert from us. He was the soul, the bond that united us. When he van-

ished, our lives changed, we met only at long intervals, as no one felt brave enough to resume the meetings interrupted by mourning.

After many months Turgénieff tried to bring us together once more. Flaubert's place was always reserved at our table, but we missed his loud voice and hearty laugh too much; they were not like the old dinners. I met the Russian novelist afterward at a reception at Madame Adam's. He had brought the Grand Duke Constantine, who, as he was passing through Paris, wished to see some of the celebrities of the day, a Madame Tussaud collection, alive and feasting. Turgénieff was depressed and ill. The cruel gout! It laid him flat for weeks, and he asked his friends to call upon him.

Two months ago I saw him for the last time. The house was still full of flowers, the same fresh young voices at the foot of the stairs, the same friend upstairs on his couch: but how changed and enfeebled! He was in the clutches of angina pectoris, and was still suffering with a ghastly wound, caused by the removal of a cyst. As he did not take chloroform, he described the operation to me with a perfectly clear memory. At first there was the sensation of a circular movement of the knife as when one peels an apple, then the excruciating pain of the cutting into the living flesh. And he added:

"I have analyzed my sensations for you to describe at one of your dinners, thinking that they would interest you."

As he could still walk a little, he went downstairs to escort me to the door. We went into the picture gallery on the ground floor and he showed me some of the works of his fellow-countrymen: a halt of Cossacks, billowy fields of grain, landscapes of hot Russia, the Russia he has described.

Old Viardot was there, slightly indisposed. In an adjoining room Garcia was singing, and Turgénieff, encompassed by the arts he loved, smiled as he bade me adieu.

A month later I learned that Viardot was dead and Turgénieff in the agony of death. I cannot believe in that agony. There must be a reprieve for noble and sovereign intellects so long as they have not said all that they have to say. The weather and the mild air of Bougival will give Turgénieff back to us, but there will be for him no more of those intimate meetings which he was so delighted to attend.

Ah! the "Flaubert dinners!" We began them again the other day: there were only three of us.[1]

While I am correcting the proofs of this article, which first appeared several years ago, a book of *Souvenirs* is handed me, wherein Turgénieff, from the grave,[2] excoriates me in the most approved style. As a writer, I am at the foot of the list; as a man, the lowest of men. And my friends are well aware of it, and they tell some fine stories about me! To what friends does Turgénieff

[1] Written in 1880, for the *Century Magazine*, New York.

[2] Turgénieff died near Paris, September 3, 1883.

refer? and how have they continued to be my friends since they know me so well? Indeed, who compelled the excellent Slav himself to wear that mask of friendliness? I can see him now in my house, at my table, gentle, affectionate, embracing my children. I have cordial, delightful letters from him. And this is what there was beneath that kindly smile. My God, how strange a thing life is, and how pretty that pretty Greek word: EIRONEIA![1]

[1] Dissimulation.

ARLATAN'S TREASURE.

EPIGRAPH.

EN CAMARGUE.

Coumo fai bon, quand lou mistrau
Pico la porto emé si bano,
Estre soulet dins la cabano,
Tout soulet coumo un mas de Crau.

E vèire pèr un pichot trau
Alin bèn liuen, dans lis engano
Lusi la palun de Girau;

E rèn ausi que lou mistrau
Picant la porto emé si bano,
Enterin pièi quauqui campano
Di rosso de la Tour-dóu-Brau.

How pleasant it is, when the mistral knocks at the door with its horns, to be alone in the cabin, all alone like a farm in Crau.

And to see through a little hole the marsh of Giraud glistening far away among the reeds.

And to hear nothing but the mistral knocking at the door with its horns; and from time to time a tinkling bell or two on the mares of Tour-du-Brau.

TO

The Dear Memory

OF

TIMOLÉON AMBROY.

CHAPTER I.

MONSIEUR HENRI DANJOU, Paris.

On receipt of your letter, my dear child, old Tim blazed up with delight like a Saint-John's-day fire. Yes, if what you say is true, if you are seriously determined to break with Madeleine Ogé, pack your trunk at once and join me; I have what you need. Not here, among the pines of Montmajour. This spot is not wild enough for the experiment you are trying; I receive reviews, newspapers in which you would find your goddess's name and a detailed account of her exploits, to say nothing of the fact that she adores the South and would be quite capable of coming down here to play *Madame Camargo* or *La Périchole* at Arles theatre, as she did ten years ago. At Montmajour, when the air is clear, we can hear the girls of Arles singing. Madeleine's voice would reach your ears all the more surely, my poor Franciot,[1] and you would be hooked again forthwith. So the place of refuge that I propose to you is a much more out-of-the-way corner, far away from everywhere, where periodicals never penetrate, where there are no show-windows for the photographs of pretty actresses, and which may be reached by following these minute directions:

[1] Franciot, Franciman. — Provençal name for the Frenchman of the North.

Arriving at Arles by the night train from Paris, go to the quay on the Rhone, where alone there are signs of life at that early hour. The steamboat which runs to Camargue is puffing at the foot of the steps. Six o'clock, all aboard! With the triple impetus of the current, the screw and the mistral, the banks glide swiftly by. On your left, Crau, an arid, stony plain; in front, Camargue, its vast delta of crops, short grass and marshes stretching away to the sea. From time to time, to port or starboard, toward Empire or toward kingdom, as our Rhone boatmen say, the boat stops at some pier, discharges farm-hands laden with tools, working-girls, basket on arm, shrouded in long, brown cloaks. At the fourth or fifth stopping-place in Camargue, when you hear the name of Giraud's farm, step ashore.

In front of the old-fashioned Provençal farm-house of the Marquises de Barbentane, with its broad stone bench and its awning of dried rushes, Charlon's carriole will await you. You remember Charlon, Mitifio's oldest son, — Mitifio, our old keeper at Montmajour, who placed your first gun in your hand? To-day Mitifio, tortured with rheumatism like his master, cannot get into his boots without horrible grimaces; and I have placed in his son's charge those Camarguais marshes, overflowing with game, which I have told you about so often. Charlon, if duly advised of your arrival, will drive you to the Cabin, our hunting-box, and see you comfortably settled there. As his own house is within three or four hundred yards of you, he will be at your service day and night, and will keep your table supplied with game and fish which the fair Naïs will cook for you in true Camargue style.

The aforesaid Naïs, now Charlon's wife, you danced with during your last trip to Montmajour, five or six

years ago; she is the daughter of one of our Crau farmers, and I remember your admiring exclamations, one Sunday when there was a cattle-branding and a bull-fight, as you saw her ride into the ring, branding-irons in hand, her beautiful red hair coiled under her little Arles cap. Doubtless you will be very glad to see her again. Aside from the Charlon household, not a neighbor, not a living soul; there is a horse herder who lives over by Vacarès pond, but the Vacarès is a good league from the Cabin; at all events, you will not hear Madeleine's name mentioned in the drover's hut any more than by Naïs and Charlon; no one will talk to you about her, nothing will remind you of her. I myself will not come to see you unless you send for me; the experiment must be complete.

Between ourselves, my dear boy, I have only a sort of half-confidence in this treatment by solitude and forgetting. Was not Jesus more violently tempted and tormented in the desert than anywhere else? So provide yourself with a good stock of determination and firmness, even in Camargue; and if you feel the danger approaching, do as the cattle do in Camargue in a hurricane. They press close together, lower their heads and face in the direction of the wind. Our Provençal shepherds call this manœuvre: *vira la bano au gisclo*, — turning the horns to the storm-cloud. I commend it to you.

T. DE LOGERET.

N. B. — Everything is lacking at the Cabin. It is as momentous a matter to procure a box of pepper as it was for Robinson Crusoe to launch his canoe. Carry candles, sugar, tea, coffee, preserves; and forgive me for interpolating these bourgeois details in such a serious and sentimental matter.

CHAPTER II.

AT the gate of Giraud's farm the man was waiting with his carriole. Danjou had some difficulty in recognizing Mitifio's son in that figure, sharp and thin as a sword-blade, in that hollow, prematurely old face.

"Have you been sick, Charlon?" he asked as they walked along together behind the carriole on which the baggage was piled, and entered the low lands.

"I, sick? — never, Monsieur Henri. Only every year, in the hot weather, all these *clars*[1] and *roubines*[2] that you see quivering and gleaming like quick-silver are regular rotten pest-holes, and if you just go out and shoot a duck, you're sure to come back with the fever. That's what raises the deuce with your skin!"

At this point Charlon blinked his little, yellow trapper's eyes, made for lying in wait on land or water, at the dandified *Franciot* with the pointed beard: "But it seems to me that your own cheeks have fallen in a bit, Monsieur Henri. And yet you don't have our swamp fevers in Paris."

[1] Ponds. [2] Irrigating canals.

"Yes, we do — and very severe ones too; I have come to Camargue to try and shake them off."

Danjou had spoken seriously. The peasant replied in the same tone of gravity: "To be sure, at this season, our country 's the healthiest in the world."

They had just left the fields belonging to Giraud's farm and were fairly in Camargue. It was a uniform line, prolonged indefinitely, broken by ponds and canals gleaming amid the yellow salt-wort. No tall trees; clumps of tamarisks and reeds, like islets on a tranquil sea. Here and there cattle-sheds, their low roofs almost level with the ground; herds scattered about, lying in the salt grass, or crowding close about the shepherd's long blouse.

To enliven the scene, the light of a fair Southern winter's day, the mistral blowing far aloft, lashing and cutting the broad red sun, causing long shadows to hurry across a lovely blue sky.

"What of your wife, pretty Naïs? You don't mention her, Charlon."

Under his faded, weather-beaten hat, the keeper drew his thick eyebrows together in a frown.

"She 's the one the fever has changed. She has it from one end of the year to the other, as you might say. Why, here it is mid-winter, and yet yesterday morning it took her again, and for two days she 's done nothing but shiver. Ah! pretty Naïs, that you danced with one whole evening at Montmajour, and who thought so much of twirling round on your arm and hearing people say all

about: 'How fine they look!' — you'd hardly know my poor wife for the same girl, and I 'm not the man to complain of it. I like her better not so pretty, and all mine."

This was said in a tone of angry earnestness which impressed the *Franciot.* "Are you jealous, Charlon?" he said; and added, with the human longing to compare everything to one's own suffering: "What would have become of you, pray, if you had for your wife an actress, a singer, obliged to undress every evening for the public, to show her arms and her shoulders?"

The keeper's eyes sparkled.

"That's no trade for our women, Monsieur Henri; I should n't know what to say about that. I just remember that I went into a *café chantant* one night at Arles, where there was one of those theatre women, who looked a little bit like Naïs. After singing she took up a collection, and when she brushed against my coat with her flesh glistening in the light, the thought that she might be my wife passed through me, and with it a longing to cry, to shout, — something I can't describe. I had to go out — I believe I should have strangled her."

There was a moment's silence.

Danjou, thinking of the lovely immodesty of some stage women, saw in his mind's eye Madeleine's dressing-room at the Délassements, the actress undressing during the entr'acte before some little scribbler or other, whom she called "my author," while the lover ate his heart out, obliged to smile, to pass pins to the dresser with hands

trembling with jealous rage and a frantic longing to do murder.

Luckily they had reached the Cabin; and the getting settled, the simple breakfast before a great blazing fire of vine-roots and tamarisks, banished all such hateful memories. While Charlon, a dawdler at table, like all peasants, finished nibbling his *cacha* cheese from the point of his knife, Henri Danjou inspected this hunting-box, a typical Camargue dwelling, which was to be his sanatorium. The only room, a large, lofty room, with no window, the roof and walls being of dry yellow rushes, looked out upon the vast plain through a glass door, which was closed at night with great shutters. Along the white-washed, rough-cast walls hung guns, game-bags and high swamp-boots. On the high, rustic chimney-piece, to which was fastened the *caleil*—the little copper lamp of antique shape — lay a few odd volumes of the Neo-Provençal library, among old pipes and bunches of dried *férigoule:* Mistral's *Mireille* and *Îles d'Or*, Aubanel's *Grenade Entr'ouverte*, Anselme Mathieu's *Farandole*, Roumanille's *Marguerites*. In the centre of the room was a mast, a genuine mast, stuck in the ground and acting as a support for the pointed roof; and at the rear two great cradle-like beds stood against the wall, behind a blue cambric curtain.

The keeper's house could be vaguely seen behind a clump of Spanish reeds, in front of the Cabin. A thin column of smoke was rising from the roof just at that moment.

"Naïs is boiling a little water for herself, *pécaïré!*" sighed Charlon, with his mouth full, in an outburst of compassion, artless in its selfishness.

"But if she is ill, who prepared this dainty little feast for us?" queried Danjou.

"*Pardi!* the little one — the same one who 'll serve your dinner to-night."

"Who is the little one?"

"Zia, Naïs's sister; she has come to stay a while with us. She 's bright and good-looking and shows a decided bent for housekeeping already. It 's a pity that she 's going back to her grandparents for her *bon jour*, her first communion as you say in the North."

Seeing that the *Franciot*, having taken an inventory of the little abode, was preparing to go out, he rose hastily, ready to attend him according to the master's orders. But Danjou would not have it.

"Thanks, thanks, Charlon. Better go and stable your horse; he 's been browsing in front of the door for an hour and is getting tired of it. I propose to walk about till night."

Around the cabin, as far as the eye could see, was an unbroken expanse of fine, closely cropped couch-grass, dotted with little flowers which are found nowhere but in Camargue, and some of which, like the *saladelles*, change their color with the season. After an hour's walk over that velvety, springy turf, where the rare shrubs that cropped up here and there retained the imprint of the mistral, and were twisted and bent toward the south, in an attitude of perpetual flight, the Parisian found

himself on the shore of Vacarès Pond — two leagues of water, without boat or sail, two leagues of gleaming waves and of a gentle plashing which attracted flocks of widgeon, herons, red-winged flamingoes, and even irises, genuine Egyptian ibises, thoroughly at home in that glorious sunlight and that silent landscape. To him the one pre-eminent feature of that solitude was the tranquillizing impression, the feeling of security, which came to him for the first time since he had left Paris.

Ah! the joy of forgetting, of ceasing to think, at all events of that woman, of ceasing to say to himself: "Five o'clock — the rehearsal is over. Will she come right home from the theatre, or will she stop at the Suède with her disgusting mummers?" — How far away it all seemed at that moment? how strong the feeling that he was sheltered, protected by that boundless expanse of blue space and cloudless sky!

As the sun sank slowly toward the water, the wind subsided. Naught could be heard save the faint lapping of the waves and the voice of a horse-herder calling to his beasts scattered along the shore of the pond: "Lucifer! Estelle! Esterel!" Each beast, as its name was called, trotted up, with waving mane, and ate the oats from the hand of the *gaucho*, who had dismounted and stood, in his fustian jacket and high boots reaching above the knee, leaning against the heavy saddle and reading a small pink-covered book. It was so beautiful — all those flying manes and

the majestically distraught gesture of the herder, distributing the oats which he took from a leather box, without taking his eyes from his book — and over it all the soft light of the setting sun!

Danjou drew near, his interest aroused both by the man and his book.

"What you are reading must be very interesting?"

An Assyrian face, with large, regular features, a long, grizzled beard and a complexion as of old ivory all mapped out by tiny wrinkles, rose and said in a hoarse voice and self-satisfied tone, lisping between rows of teeth as white and highly polished as almonds.

"Very interesting indeed, my good friend. The name of it is — wait a minute till I look — the name of it is *Anti-Glaireux*."[1]

So that was what he was reading, amid that gorgeous scenery, in that heroic attitude! — one of the notices that are wrapped around druggist's phials — the *Anti-Glaireux!* And to complete the bedazzlement of the gentleman from Paris, he added:

"I have a stock of these little pamphlets. I bought them at the sale of an apothecary at Tour-Saint-Louis. It 's all part of my treasure, Arlatan's treasure, famous in all Camargue. If you 'll come and see me some day, I 'll show it to you. My cabin's yonder, in the hollow. Good evening, my dear young man."

"Good-night, Master Arlatan."

[1] Anti-Mucous.

The walk home in the twilight was exquisite. As he hastened toward the Cabin, Danjou once more heard the voice of the *Anti-Glaireux*, gathering his horses for the night; then the sound gave place to a tremendous pattering of hoofs, like a shower of rain.

Thousands of sheep, called together by shepherds and worried by dogs, came running from the pastures. He was conscious of being overrun, jostled, inextricably mixed up in that whirlwind of curly fleeces and bleatings, a veritable wave which seemed to carry the shepherds along with its shadow. A moment later a long triangle of ducks passed, flying very low across the darkened sky, as if they proposed to light. Suddenly the leader turned his head and flew upward with a wild cry, and the whole flock followed him.

The door of the Cabin, invisible until then, had suddenly opened, throwing a great square of flickering light on the level turf; at the same time the shadow of a tall, willowy Arlesian girl appeared, in brown cloak and little cap, coming from Charlon's house, and in the darkness almost brushed against the *Franciot*, who, thinking that he recognized his former partner at Montmajour, said:

"Good-evening, Naïs."

A smothered laugh was the young woman's only reply as she vanished, as if by magic, in the surrounding darkness.

Within, the table was set for one, the lamp and the fire lighted; and, while an odorous eel soup

smoked on the festive board, between a bottle of cheap red wine and a snow-white loaf, two or three little covered dishes simmering in front of the hot ashes, beside several spare plates of yellow earthenware, said in excellent French: "Here's your dinner, help yourself." That table all laid, that brightly lighted and deserted cabin, in the centre of that vast, black expanse, had a charming flavor of mystery and surprise.

He ate with even better appetite than in the morning, a volume of Mistral on the table beside him, but reading little, hypnotized by the dense silence of the environing darkness and by the sounds by which it was interrupted now and again. Sometimes it was a flock of cranes flying over the cabin, with a great rustling of feathers in the keen air, a flapping of weary wings, bellied out like sails. Sometimes it was a melancholy note passing high in air like the humming of a sea-shell. Standing at the open door, he was trying to make out what that strange cry could be, when the keeper appeared, preceded by the wavering circles of light from a great lantern.

"That's the *bitor*, as we call him, Monsieur Henri; he fishes with a great beak that makes that rolling sound in the water — *rrroou*. He's a pretty bird to shoot, and when he's fried as Naïs fries him, with a good sauce, there's not too much of a fishy flavor to him."

"Your wife's a fine cook, Charlon; but why doesn't she recognize her old friends?"

"Why, Monsieur, it wasn't Naïs you just met;

it was Zia, who's as big as her sister, although she 's little more than fifteen."

" Zia is fifteen? and she has not been to her first communion yet?"

Charlon did not answer. His lantern had gone out in a gust of wind from the south which had suddenly sprung up. They went into the cabin and were smoking their pipes without speaking, as they leaned over the fire, when the keeper continued in a melancholy tone:

" Ah, who knows what goes on in the heads of those little cats? Why, three times she 's been on the point of taking her *bon jour* and M. le Curé has put her off to another year. And yet she has all the education she needs. She has her catechism at her fingers' ends. And then she 's a good child in every way. But there must be something out of the way when our priest, who 's one of the best of men — Naïs and I don't know what to think."

He rose to throw a stump on the dying fire, and, as the red flame soared and roared, his thoughts became calmer once more. Surely they had got to the end of the wretched business now. The time for the communion was drawing near and the little one had not stirred from their house since Naïs was sick, so that had served for her period of seclusion. Up at Montmajour she was too near the town and its temptations, shops with mirrors and gilding, show-windows filled with lace, jewels and velvet bows, everything the devil uses to lead young girls astray; whereas in Camargue —

" Oh! in Camargue," Danjou interrupted him,

with a laugh, "in Camargue it's a very simple matter. I can think of nothing by way of temptation of the devil or mirror for larks except Arl — what's the man's name? — Arlatan's treasure."

"Do you know Arlatan?" queried Charlon in amazement; and in view of the irreverent way in which the *Franciot* referred to one of the glories of the neighborhood, he felt it incumbent on him to tell the story of the herder's life and triumphs, firstly as a brander of cattle, leader of a herd renowned in all Provençal bull-rings, even in the arenas of Arles and Nîmes. Arlatan, having fallen sick, as a consequence of dissipation and fatigue, had taken to the trade of herder of horses, which was less laborious and less dangerous, and by dint of treating his own ailments with herbs and salves of his invention, had acquired throughout Camargue, from Trinquetaille to Faraman, great celebrity as a magic healer, especially in cases of fever and rheumatism. Was it deserved? Charlon had too little knowledge to undertake to say.

"What I can swear to," Naïs's husband concluded, as he relighted his lantern preparatory to returning home, "is that I caught the fever shooting wild duck at Chartrouse last year, and he cured me with two visits and a jar of his green balm."

"In that case, why don't you send your wife to him?"

"Naïs won't listen to it at any price; she has a horror of that man as she has of a salamander. And yet there 's nothing unpleasant about him — indeed he was a magnificent specimen in his

younger days. I remember that, when I was a mere boy, I used to go to the seashore to see the men who raced with young partridges; and among those ten tall fellows standing in a line, all naked and black, with leather straps around their waists, he was the one the women all looked at. And when he appeared in the branding ring no one had any eyes except for the brown beauty, as they called him; — why even the ladies from the city used to run after him. Naïs not only won't go to see him, but when he comes to our house, she gets out of sight and she has forbidden Zia to go near his cabin. Well, Monsieur Henri, I believe I must go home and to bed. The south wind is blowing a gale; in an hour you'll be hearing the Faraman cow bellow."

"What cow is that, Charlon?"

"The sea, Monsieur Henri. When the wind blows in our faces here, across the Faraman sands, the sea bellows so loud, that we've given it that name in this herding country of ours."

In truth the Faraman cow never stopped through the night. The reeds whistled, the Cabin creaked in every joint; with the sea in the distance, and the wind which seemed to bring it nearer and swell its dull roar, Danjou, unable to sleep, fancied himself in the stateroom of a ship. Unfortunately Madeleine was with him. He lay until morning with eyes wide open in the darkness, living over again hour by hour the degrading romance of their rupture; La Ogé still on the stage, he lying on the divan in the dressing-room, waiting for his

mistress in front of a large mirror, in which he suddenly saw Armand the handsome baritone, the singer's neighbor on the corridor, enter the room half-dressed, dripping with cold cream, and run to the little otter-skin muff hanging on the curtain-rod, to get the letter which awaited him every night: "My dearest Armand, I thought he would dine with his father and mother — "

That letter, snatched from fat, ring-laden fingers, Danjou knew by heart; and now he pitilessly repeated it to himself, twisting and turning on his cattle-herder's bed. After he had had the courage to go away without seeing the woman, without leaving a word for her, he asked himself, in dire dismay, if she were going to haunt him every night as at that moment, with her pretty smile, her alluring voluptuous smile, leaning over the bed, and that expressive, sorrowful voice which he heard sighing around the house, wailing under the rattling door, moaning a prayer for forgiveness, yonder on the sands of Faraman.

CHAPTER III.

THE fresh salt breeze from the sea and the glaring light out-of-doors roused him abruptly from one of those heavy slumbers, one of those bottomless sloughs in which we founder after a sleepless night. Oh! the divine awakening! — how very little resemblance there was between what he now saw and Madeleine's dressing-room in the wings at the Délassements! Standing a few steps away, in the frame formed by the open door, stood a very young girl, tall and fair, in an ample muslin neckerchief and the high Arles headdress, the *pointe* which makes the head seem small and dainty; a cameo-like profile, in which a few lines were still undefined, was bending over a book which she held in both hands and was reading eagerly with a childish movement of the lips.

"God grant it's not the *Anti-Glaireux!*" was the Parisian's first thought, remembering his disillusionment of the previous evening; but from his bed, through the opening in the blue curtain, he could read the title of the volume, Aubanel's *La Grenade Entr'ouverte*, that immortal book of passion and despair, that song of a turtle-dove stabbed to the heart, with which old Tim had lulled

him to sleep in infancy. And as a couplet, a cry passed through his memory:

> "Mirror, mirror, show her to me,
> Thou who hast seen her so often!"

or:

> "What dost thou wish, my heart, what hunger doth consume thee?
> Ah! tell me why thou art always weeping like a little child?"

he fancied that he saw Zia's little brown hands tremble (for, of course, it was Zia) and a faint red flush flit over her pale cheeks. A strange book to be reading, by the way, on the eve of a first communion! To be sure Aubanel's strophes are chaste, but they burn.

> "Ah! had my heart but wings,
> 'T would fly, a breath of fire,
> Over thy neck and shoulders —"

And simultaneously with the poet's lines, Danjou remembered his talk of the night before with Charlon, the terrors of the keeper and his wife on the subject of that *bon jour*, so cruelly postponed. Poor little Zia, can it be that this time again —

As if he had uttered his thoughts aloud, the girl raised her pretty tawny head, looked out, then in, and, laying her book on the corner of the mantel from which she had taken it, she closed the door hastily and disappeared, with the grace of a startled fawn whom one disturbs in the act of drinking from a woodland stream.

That fascinating apparition haunted him all the

morning; he did not leave the Cabin, always expecting to see her return, and reading until noon the love poems, *Mireille* and *La Grenade*, before a huge cluster of water plants — trefoil, gentian, centaurea — which Zia had arranged in a green stone jar in the middle of the table.

When the breakfast hour arrived, as there seemed to be nothing stirring in the direction of the Charlons', save a thread of yellow smoke floating upward, Danjou betook himself to the keeper's house, which stood in the shelter of a small forest of rushes growing close together and rustling like banana-trees; with its newly whitened walls, its red tiled roof, its trellis over the door, it made a patch of dancing white light on the edge of a large pond of running water, full to overflowing. At the approach of a strange footstep, a fierce barking shook the low door of the kennel, while a woman kneeling by the pond, bare-armed, busily skinning a huge eel in the midst of a pool of blood, called to the dog: "Sh! Miraclo! Be quiet!" without rising or turning her head. Danjou fancied that he recognized his vision of the morning, that bunch of red hair escaping from the little *pointe*, the white neck, the slender arms.

"So they have left you alone with Miracle, little Zia?" he said, walking to the edge of the pond.

"It is n't Zia, Monsieur Henri. My sister went away this morning."

"Why, is it Naïs? You are better, then?"

"A little better, thanks."

She spoke very pure Provençal, with the purring,

feline intonation, the affected charm which the girls of Arles give to it, ostentatiously keeping her eyes lowered, as if absorbed by her work. At daybreak they had been notified that the agent of Giraud's farm was to go to Arles by the boat; and as the little one had to be sent home for her approaching *bon jour*, Charlon had gone to place her in M. Anduze's charge — a most excellent man and successful raiser of bees, just the sort to look after a child of her age.

"Ah! Monsieur Henri," sighed the peasant woman, her heart heavy with her griefs and the longing to talk about them, but still persisting in not looking at her former partner. A shot rang out at a great distance, as if on the level of the ground. Naïs uttered a joyful exclamation:

"There's Charlon — he's coming back by the canal so as to shoot some *galejon* on the way. I must go and make the soup."

Pulling her handkerchief over her eyes, she sprang to her feet, and, passing before the *Franciot* like a flash, entered her kitchen with her basket full of fish. The keeper appeared at that moment, standing in his *naye-chien*, a small narrow skiff which he propelled with a long pole, and which, coming out of the canal into the pond, touched the shore in front of the house.

"Excuse me, Monsieur Henri — the wife told you, did n't she?" Charlon made his boat fast to a stake, put ashore the fruits of his hunting and fishing, a *bêchet* and two *charlottines*, washed up the eel's blood from the pier and threw away the

skin, all the while telling Naïs about the little one; how she had started all right with M. Anduze on board the *Ville-de-Lyon*, Captain Bonnardel. On his return he had been delayed by a chance meeting with two keepers of Eyssette's herd, who, being crazy with fever, were going to Arlatan for treatment.

"Just as I passed in my boat they both had a chill at the same time. Their horses had stopped on the edge of the canal, and there they sat in their saddles, side by side, shivering away, and each of them clinging fast to his long trident, which he had stuck in the ground; and they trembled so hard — *cla, cla* — that their very beasts shook. Luckily my flask was full of rum, so they were able to keep on. Arlatan's treasure will do the rest."

From the kitchen came Naïs's voice in a scolding tone:

"Arlatan, Charlatan! Ugh! the vile man — "

"But he cures them all," replied Charlon, in the tone with which one approaches a family dispute of long standing; and, calling Danjou to his aid, he continued:

"Come, Monsieur Henri, I leave it to you if she would n't do better, instead of giving so many wretched reasons, to allow herself to be cured?"

"Hush, Charlon. I have told you a hundred times I prefer to suffer, I prefer to die, rather than go to see that villain or let him come into our house. His eyes frighten me, fascinate me like a snake's eyes. Now you 've said enough, my man; go and take Monsieur Henri his stew."

"But as I am here, I will breakfast with you."

"Oh! no, no! I beg you not to!"

The peasant woman's cry of dismay was so sincere that Danjou did not insist, but returned to the cabin to eat his breakfast alone, puzzled by Naïs's obstinacy in keeping her face hidden from him, and especially annoyed because he had not seen Zia's pale and delicate features beneath her white piqué cap once more before she disappeared.

In the afternoon he hunted with Charlon in the marsh; and the novel style of hunting, sometimes on foot, in huge boots made of leather throughout, walking slowly, prudently, to avoid being mired, pushing aside the salt-smelling reeds full of lively grass-hoppers; sometimes in the narrow, flat-bottomed *naye-chien*, which rolled with every movement, the laborious handling of the rod, the raising and lowering of the lock-gates — all this healthy, fatiguing exercise diverted him from his grief. The memory of Madeleine Ogé left him almost at peace until evening. As he was lighting his lantern to return home, Charlon said to him timidly, while his long moustache quivered: —

"You must n't take it ill of her, Monsieur Henri; I know now why Naïs keeps out of your sight, why she 's so obstinate about not letting you see her. She says that she 's too ugly now and does n't want to spoil the picture you had of her. Our women of this Arles country think so much of their faces!"

"Your wife's face certainly was very lovely five or six years ago."

"Yes, yes, she was pretty enough," said honest Charlon, wrinkling his little yellow eyes. But, after all, one could but feel that he spoke of that vanished beauty without regret. His jealousy had suffered too much on account of it.

Throughout the week, Danjou lived an animal-like life of violent exercise, which tired his muscles, soothed his nerves, and gave him nights of impenetrable sleep which the memory of his mistress did not once succeed in penetrating. He laughed heartily to himself, thinking of old Tim and his predictions. The desert was a success with him, so far.

One evening when the keeper had appointed to meet him at the great pond of Chartrouse at six o'clock, Danjou, having arrived first, had installed himself in the middle of the pond, on a little island covered with tamarisks, a patch of dry land just large enough to shelter him and his dog, an enormous Pyrenees hound with coarse red hair. The night came down almost immediately, cool and silent, the wind and sun disappearing at the same time. For a moment a faint light remained on the pond and lighted up the sky, then faded away, until one could scarcely detect a tuft of grass, a wild fowl skimming along the marsh.

"Is that you, Charlon?" cried the hunter, hearing the water splash under a heavy tread, which stopped as he called; but no one answered. He called again, fancying that he could distinguish a motionless shadow over the water; and, as the darkness deepened, he finally returned to the

Cabin, wondering what could have happened to the keeper.

As usual, he found the fire lighted and the table set; he dined alone and was smoking his pipe by the fire when the door suddenly opened.

"What, you, little Zia? Are you back again?"

She stood with her head resting against the mantel, excited and pale.

"My sister is sick. Charlon has gone to Saintes-Maries for the doctor."

Her voice quivered, heavy with tears. He tried at first to quiet her. She must wait and see. Perhaps her sister was not seriously sick.

"Yes, she is, very sick, and it's my fault. Because they would n't let me take my *bon jour* this time either. When I came home this morning with M. le Curé's letter, Naïs dropped like a stone."

She herself, as if crushed by the avowal of her shame, let her arms fall at her sides, her tall figure drooped, and she sat down, sobbing bitterly, her face in her hands, on the hot stone hearth. "Oh! God, is such a thing possible at my time of life?" she cried in a childish, despairing tone. The whole province would point their fingers at her now as a huzzy, a *caraque* from the Pont-du-Gard. And yet she had never done wrong, never given any bad reasons,—"I swear it on the Blessed Image—"

Opening her neckerchief with an excited movement, the child took from her breast a little scapulary of blue cloth, pale and discolored, which she kissed frantically. Then she sprang to her feet,

staring wildly about, her eyes unnaturally large, those lovely brown eyes which shone green through her tears.

"No, I have never done wrong," she added. "But I have one misfortune, — I see things, — oh! such things — it's horrible. They come as soon as I close my eyes, and even if I keep them open; forbidden things which haunt me and burn me. That's why the priest would n't let me go to communion."

"Poor little girl!" murmured Danjou, sorely troubled to meet in the desert this distress of mind so nearly akin to his own.

"Oh! yes, you may well say poor little girl. How I have suffered these last two years! How I have tried to drive those horrid things away from my eyes! Now, it's all over, I am sure of it, I have nothing more to hope for; my eyes will never rest except at the bottom of the Vacarès."

She paused, hearing shouts and calls in the direction of the farmhouse.

"Do you want to go back to your sister?" suggested Danjou gently. The child did not want to, she was afraid of getting there before the doctor, of finding her sister still stretched out like a dead woman. Besides their grandmother had come from Montmajour, so Naïs had somebody with her.

She said this, in a wild, absent-minded way, listening to the distant noises. Hearing nothing more, she resumed her place under the *caleil*, by the fireside, the place allotted to the children and

the old people in our Provençal kitchens. And there, trembling and shamefaced, she candidly answered the *Franciot* as he questioned her gently, tenderly, like a doctor and like a father. No, she did not invent the wretched things she saw, she did not find them in her imagination; some one had shown them to her a long while before, in engravings, in colored pictures.

"But, you know, little Zia, such images fade away in time. You say it's a long while since you saw them. How does it happen!"

"Ah! that's where my sin is, that's why I am cursed!" The fierce movement with which she raised her little head shook two golden tresses from beneath the *pointe*, and they mingled with the black ribbon of the scapulary on her neck. "Yes, things fade away in time, but when they fade too soon I miss them, my eyes are thirsty for them, they insist on going back to drink, and then — and then — She hastily checked herself: "Mon Dieu! what have you made me say; has it driven me mad to see Naïs in that state? for I hardly know you; why do I confess all my shame to you, when I have never mentioned it to any one, not even to Charlon, who loves me so dearly?"

He leaned toward her, and his eyes rested upon hers, which tried to avoid them.

"Listen, Zia. Perhaps the reason why you tell me of your trouble with so much confidence, although you don't know me, is that I too have a little of the same trouble myself, a miserable image

in the depths of my heart, in the depths of my eyes, of which I am trying by every possible means to rid myself. That is why I have come so far away, to Camargue, to the desert, to divert my thoughts, to forget. And do you know what has done me more good than anything else since I have been here? Look on the mantel — there are your Provençal poets, the *Félibres*, as they call themselves. The other morning I saw you looking over one of them in front of my door. Why do you blush? The stories the *Félibres* tell us are always very pure, very beautiful. Have you read *Mireille?*"

"No, Monsieur Henri. Naïs once forbade me to. But one evening when I was at the Cabin, Charlon being at the *espère* with the other men, the book you mention fell into my hands. I didn't understand it very well, but at one time what I was reading seemed so beautiful to me that the page was all blurred and I saw a star twinkle in the middle of it."

She stopped, deeply moved. Danjou also remained silent for a moment, then said, gravely: —

"The star that you saw one day in *Mireille* is in all true poets. You must read them often, little one. They will fill your eyes with beams of light and leave no place for —"

A clashing of stirrups, loud voices and a succession of thundering blows on the door drowned the closing words of his sentence. Shadows of mounted men appeared through the glass.

"What do you want?" called Danjou, antici-

pating some affair between gamekeepers and poachers.

A voice answered before he had opened the door: —

"Look out. The Roman has escaped!"

This Roman, the terror of Camargue, renowned in all the arenas of the South, was a small, stocky, black bull, of evil temper, the leader of Sabran's herd, pastured over by the lighthouse; he had run away that morning, driven wild by some evil-minded gadfly. As it happened, there was a bull-fight appointed for the following Sunday, and stacks of pistoles were staked on this monster of a Roman, whose name stood at the head of the list; wherefore the five or six men in charge of the herd had been in the saddle since dawn, carefully scouring the marsh and going from farm to farm, for the double purpose of making inquiries and putting people on their guard.

Among these horsemen, booted to the thighs and carrying their tridents over their shoulders, was one man on foot, wrapped in a long cloak, who waved a blazing pitch-pine torch, and said in a commanding voice: —

"I tell you that at the six o'clock *espère* he was in the middle of the great pond."

"Are you speaking of me, Master Arlatan?" asked the Parisian, appearing in the doorway; he had recognized his herder from the banks of the Vacarès by his tall figure and his determined tone. "I was, in fact, watching for game, as you say, at that hour to-night."

"I was speaking of the Roman, friend, and of you too, if you choose, for you were n't four yards from the beast."

"*Diantre!*" said Danjou with a laugh, "you would have done well to warn me. True, I remember now a dark, motionless form a few steps away."

"The little blonde in here must suit you better as a companion, eh?" said the herder, putting his beautiful Assyrian beard through the half-open door. He had caught sight of Zia, a white figure in the lamplight, her neckerchief thrown open, her golden hair falling over her shoulders; and said to her in a jesting, mocking tone: "So you have come back to us, my pretty maid? You know that if you 're afraid to go home on account of the Roman, one of these men can take you across his saddle, or I 'll take you myself under my big cape."

Zia, as she adjusted her neckerchief and her scapulary, somewhat confused, replied that she needed no one's assistance.

"All right, all right, we shall meet another time." — He bestowed a patronizing smile upon her; then added, turning to Danjou and bowing to the ground: "Glad to see you, Monsieur le *Franciot*, if you happen to catch a bad fever some day; or if you care to look at the Treasure, I am at your service."

With that he strode away, holding his torch aloft, in a Rembrandtesque light, followed by the horsemen with their long three-pronged spears.

Danjou, once more alone with the child, had a feeling of embarrassment; she too seemed to

have lost all spontaneity, all confidence. Doubtless that clown's sneer was the cause.

"I am like Naïs," said Henri, "I don't take to Master Arlatan." And, noticing Zia's distraught, undecipherable expression, and believing that she was thinking solely of the Roman and dreading to go home alone, he insisted on escorting her to her door.

It was a calm, mild night, one of those nights of bright moonlight when the smallest tuft of grass casts a shadow, when the solitary carter, feeling the presence of his double beside him, shudders involuntarily with a sort of nervous discomfort, as if some one were walking at his side or behind him. They walked side by side for a moment, without speaking, in that flood of hazy blue light, watching Arlatan's torch gleaming like red fire on the horizon amid the humming of the *biou* (sea-shell), and the shouts of the drovers: "*té! té! trrr-trrr.*"

"Are n't you afraid, little one?" queried Danjou.

"Afraid of the Roman? Oh! no, monsieur," said the child of Camargue, seasoned to bull-fights and brandings.

"Then, let us not hurry, but do you listen."

Slackening his pace, he began to recite in Provençal, with vibrating voice, one of the loveliest passages of the poem of *La Grenade Entr'ouverte:*

De la man d'eila de la mar,
Dins mis ouro de pantaiage,
Souventi fes ieu fau un viage.[1]

[1] On the shore of the Latin Sea,
The rhymes rang out and mounted like golden arrows
Into that azure sky, so truly theirs.

"Mon Dieu! how lovely it is!" murmured the child, in ecstasy.

They approached Charlon's house, where they heard cheerful, reassuring voices. In front of the house the spectacle was magnificent, the whole marsh illuminated: stars twinkling in the pond and the canals, to whose lowest depths the moonlight found its way.

"Good-night, little Zia," said Henri in an undertone to the child, whose forehead glistened in the light, as white and mysterious as a consecrated wafer. "When you come to the Cabin again, we will read more of the poets; the poets will save us."

CHAPTER IV.

ON that lovely Sunday in February, there was to be an *abrivade*, bull-fight and branding, at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. At an early hour in the morning, Charlon might have been seen in front of his door, pouring wine for two cattle-herders, scarred and moustachioed, with long woollen belts around their loins, and leading a slender white filly, which gave the two Camargue *grignons* much trouble. Danjou happened to be returning from hunting, and had just stopped to toss his booty on the kitchen-table at the farm as usual.

The keeper ran to meet him.

"Look, Monsieur Henri, guess who 's going to ride this beautiful filly, all harnessed with silk and gold. I 'll give you a hundred, yes, a thousand guesses."

"Hold your tongue, you great simpleton!" cried Naïs, suddenly appearing in an embroidered velvet head-dress, which dated back to her marriage, and a royal blue bodice, which accentuated the yellow tinge of her thin, fever-marked face, with its drawn features, its black-ringed, unnaturally large eyes. At last the fair Naïs allowed herself to be seen, but she seemed far from proud of her

beauty; and it was pitiful to hear her say, as she turned her face away in confusion, while her slender figure swayed to and fro on the high Saracen saddle with every caper of the filly:

"Don't look, I beg you, I am not myself. I am ashamed to be so ugly."

O Provence, O land of love, where else can peasants and farm-girls be found, who are so consumed with grief by the loss of their beauty as are thine?

Charlon protested, called upon the herders to bear witness to his wife's grace, to her skill in keeping her seat while she galloped around the ring, branding with a red-hot iron all the bulls in a herd.

"You are wrong not to come and see it, Monsieur le Parisien, it's well worth the trouble. Come along! I'll take you and Zia both in my *carriole*."

"Thanks for me, brother," said the child, who was carrying the flask of wine and the glasses back into the kitchen. "Thanks, but I'll stay at home with Mamette."

"What! you're not coming to the branding?"

"Let her stay, if that's her whim," said Naïs sternly from her saddle.

Ever since Zia's return after missing her *bon jour* again, there had been a constant interchange of harsh words and glances without affection between the two sisters. Charlon, who was heartbroken by the misunderstanding among his womankind, hastened to suggest that, as M. Henri was not

going to the branding either, the little one must fix him up a *gardiane* of fish that would make him lick his chops. She could do it almost as well as her sister Naïs.

Whereupon Sister Naïs angrily whipped up her steed.

"Good-day, all!" she cried, already some distance away. And behind the floating ribbons of her head-dress the Camargue *grignons* galloped along with flying mane, sweeping the fine grass with their long tails.

About mid-day Danjou lay on the turf on the shore of the Vacarès, questioning himself with some inquietude, as he listened to the short waves of that inland sea breaking softly all about him. "What's the matter with me? Whence comes this vague feeling of ennui, this heaviness of heart? For ten days Paris has left me in peace. I have thought of nothing, regretted nothing. A few weeks more of this complete Nirvâna and I might believe that I am cured. Why, then, this depression to-day? Is it because I dreamed of passing this afternoon with Zia, of reading poetry in front of the Cabin, and the child refused, alleging as a pretext a bad headache which compelled her to return to the farm?

"Perhaps it was true after all; her pallor, the expression of pain in her glance when she left me. Unless the poor creature has had a sudden return of her trouble—"

Thus a thousand contradictory thoughts jostled one another in his mind, while before him the

waves lapped the high, velvety, green bank, dotted with flowers of unique and delicate beauty; and he heard the bells of a herd of wild horses, sometimes approaching, sometimes very far away, scattered about almost inaudible in the gusts of wind. Suddenly, as he raised his head above a clump of blue *saladelles*, he spied Arlatan the herder, his blouse bellied out by the squall, walking with long strides toward his hut; and saw him, when he reached the door, climb to the top of the *guinchadou*, a primitive sort of ladder, a rustic observatory of considerable height, from which he could keep watch upon his herd.

He had no sooner descended than a woman swathed to the eyes in a long cloak of the color of dead leaves came around the corner of the hovel and entered directly on the herder's heels. Although she passed very swiftly and was carefully muffled up, Danjou fancied that he recognized her by an indefinable grace and youthful elasticity of movement. "Zia? at that old madman's house? It can't be. Why should she go there? And yet, who knows?"

He remembered the girl's shudder beneath Arlatan's cynical glance, the evening that the herder surprised them sitting by the fire; he remembered the suspicion that had passed swiftly through his mind of a possible liaison between Zia and that ex-beau of the marshes. To learn the truth he had but to walk two or three hundred yards across the pasture and show himself suddenly.

There was no reply to his first knock at the

door. He knocked again, and that time the herder came and opened the door, bare-headed, in heavy boots and green fustian jacket. He smiled, a perfectly frank, proud smile, without the least indication of surprise when he saw who his visitor was.

"Come in, my dear friend." While he lisped these words in his hoarse voice, the gleam that shot between his eyelids said as clearly as possible: "You can search everywhere, turn everything inside out; what you are looking for is no longer here."

"So you did n't go to the branding, Master Arlatan?" asked the Parisian, a little disconcerted to find himself alone with him in the only room the hut contained, of which his glance speedily grasped all the contents. The herder shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah! *vaï!* brandings, indeed! I've seen too many of them." He kicked aside a trunk studded with great copper nails which lay in the middle of the floor between two stools, took one of these rustic seats, cut from the trunk of a willow, for himself, and offered Danjou the other, with the flowing, emphatic gesture which the boundless Camargue stage seemed to have made habitual to him.

"All that you see here," he said superbly," from the roof to the walls of the house, I myself made. That block of wood on which you are sitting, yonder bed of plaited osiers in the corner, these torches of virgin pine, this hearth made of three black stones, even the pestle with which I grind

my medicinal herbs and the lock on the door and the key made of the same white wood — all is my handiwork."

He followed Danjou's glance in the direction of the trunk.

"That, however, is not of my making. But with your permission we will talk about it some other day; at this moment I am not at leisure. Ah! my friend, you talk of brandings — in yonder trunk I have medals and certificates from mayors, and cockades won from the most famous bulls. My last I won at the arena at Arles, just ten years ago next Sunday; I took it from the horns of a Spaniard, a great wild red devil who had ripped up hundreds of Christians. Ah! I showed him the trick as he wanted to see it, I gave him all he wanted of it — *à la landaise* and *à la Provençale*, *au raset* and *à l'écart*. I jumped all about him, in front and behind, then grabbed him by his two long horns, and with a blow on the side, *sou!* he was on his back in the ring with his four hoofs in the air. His name was Musulman."

The herder had risen as he spoke and accentuated his story with dramatic action. Danjou, still seated and intent upon his search, tried to prolong the interview.

"It 's a strange thing, Master Arlatan, that all the drovers I have ever met bear some marks of the horns on their forehead or cheeks, but you have n't a scratch."

Arlatan drew himself up.

"Nothing on my face, young man. But if I

should show you my body I have a memento of Musulman here on my right side, a gash an inch wide. It was one of your Parisian women who sewed it up for me the same night," he added, winking fatuously.

Danjou started!

"A Parisian?"

"Yes, and a pretty one, and famous, too; which did n't prevent her passing two days with me in the pasture."

Madeleine Ogé's lover longed to say: "A singer, perhaps?" but a feeling of shame deterred him.

The other continued, carelessly:

"By the way, her picture 's in the Treasure yonder, a superb woman, undressed to the waist. If you choose to give me half a pistole, I 'll show it to you one of these days, with a lot of others; but just at this moment I must ask you to excuse me; I am preparing a green balm, for you know I deal in unlawful medicine, as Doctor Escambar of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer says. Well, I hope to see you again soon, my dear comrade." And he smilingly closed the door on him.

Outside, it was the close of day. The mistral saluted him with a lively serenade which swept across the pasture land, making tails and manes blow merrily while the stallions neighed and jingled their bells in that vast, unbroken plain, which its mighty breath seemed to flatten and expand. As far as the eye could see, the Vacarès shone resplendent. Huge herons soared above it, outlined against

the green sky like slim hieroglyphics; flamingoes with white breasts and red wings, standing in line to fish along the shore, arranged their varied colors in one long even band. But all this witchery of the hour and the landscape was lost upon the unhappy wight, who returned to his cabin thinking of but one thing, seeing but one thing, his mistress's portrait in that drover's trunk. For it did not occur to him for one moment to doubt that it was Madeleine.

To be sure, Parisian women capable of losing their heads over a makeshift matador are not rare; but the coincidence of her having been in Provence just at that time, the cynical, brutal caprice, quite characteristic of the lady — and even the vague feeling of depression of which he was seeking the cause but now. No! doubt did not seem possible to him. Another one of whom she would say, weeping on his shoulder: "That was before I knew you, my Henri." The handsome Armand too — that was before she knew him. Before, during and after. Ah! strumpet! And he had believed that he was cured of that slime-begotten passion, that he had found a refuge from its enervating fevers! Why need he have gone into that Huron's wigwam? And, when he had gone so far, why not go on to the end, and carry away a proof, the woman's name, her portrait? What idiotic pride had restrained him? He knew well enough now, that he could never go beyond that point, that he could not live in that oppressive uncertainty. He was familiar with those paroxysms of degrading

jealousy, heart-burnings, visions, nightmare-ridden nights. But to come to Camargue, to the desert of deserts, in search of them!

"Here's Monsieur Henri," said a voice in the darkness, a few steps away.

He had reached the Cabin, where Charlon and his wife, just returned from the branding, were impatiently awaiting him. Danjou was impressed by their excitement as he entered the room. Naïs especially, in her festal garb, her poor face contorted, as if carved with a knife, under the gold-embroidered Arles cap, was pacing furiously from one end of the room to the other, and confronted him as he entered, lighted from below by the great fire of roots which Charlon, on his knees, had just lighted.

"Tell me quick, Monsieur Henri," she panted as if she had been running far, — "tell me, is it true that my sister passed the afternoon reading with you at the Cabin?"

At first he did not understand. Little Zia and her story were so far from his thoughts now! But he recovered himself instantly, and in face of the anxiety of those worthy people, especially when he imagined the girl herself with her great eyes gazing beseechingly at him, he did not hesitate to lie, having a secret presentiment that he must begin in that way, for the peace of mind of one and all.

"Why, certainly, my good Naïs, your sister passed the afternoon at the Cabin."

"You see, wife," cried Charlon joyfully. Naïs, partly reassured, questioned him further.

"Ah! Monsieur Henri!"

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"Then you have n't been long away?"

"No, no! But why all these questions?"

"She won't tell you," said Charlon, piling vine-stumps on the fire in his joy, at the risk of burning the house down. "But I will, deuce take it! I can't keep it to myself, I am so happy. Just imagine that for a fortnight past, ever since the child came back to us, our house, where we all used to be so fond of each other, has become a perfect hell. The women are snarling at each other all day. Naïs and the grandmother keep the little one crying all the time, because of her *bon jour.* And, to cap the climax, here 's Mamette accusing her of passing the whole of Sunday afternoon — guess where? At Arlatan's! Zia at Arlatan's, upon my word! What for? It 's a long while since the brown beauty stopped shooting larks and gave up the sex to devote himself to drugs. And yet Naïs was in such a rage that I thought she was going to have the same kind of an attack she had the other time. Luckily your welcome words have quieted her. Well, Naïs?"

Still crouching in front of the fire, he pulled her gently by her royal blue bodice; but, paying no more attention to him than to Miracle, whom they could hear lapping water and munching dogbread in the dark, before the door, Naïs said, holding back her tears:

"Ah! Monsieur Henri, if you knew the trouble that child gives me! She has n't any father or mother, nobody but Mamette the grandmother, who can't see much nowadays, and me, her older

sister, almost always away from her. And besides, I don't know how to take her. I love her as if she was my child and Charlon's; but I frighten her, and I can't find out what 's the matter with her, what it is that makes her so unhappy. Why, when she sits by my side for hours at a time, without speaking, with her way of seeming to look into herself, I would like to crush her in an iron mortar to find out a little of what she 's thinking about! For it 's her dreaming that 's unhealthy, poor child; she is n't capable of doing wrong, at least so I think, and Monsieur le Curé thinks so too."

"Then he ought to have let her take her *bon jour*," said Charlon rising.

"Why, booby, you know very well that the last time she was the one who refused; she thought she was n't worthy. My poor sister," continued Naïs, turning to Henri, "has a disease, it seems, that they call — what was it Monsieur le Curé called it? — oh! yes the *escruple*."

Charlon joyously interrupted her: "Whatever it may be, now that you know the little one was n't at Arlatan's you will do me the pleasure of giving each other a good hug when you go home, and then be friends as before. A poor man's house is too melancholy when the people in it don't love each other."

The fire blazed merrily, the *Franciot's* table was set; Charlon put his arm around his ugly darling's waist and led her away toward their house to the tune of a farandole, popular throughout Provence:

Madame de Limagne
Fait danser les chevaux de carton.

He returned during the evening, but this time with little Zia. Henri who was reading by the fire, under the *caleil*, answered in monosyllables, his book interested him so deeply.

For a moment Zia and Danjou were left alone, Charlon having gone to fill the pitchers at the *common well*, an old well with a chain and wheel halfway between the Cabin and the farm-house. She passed him two or three times, then suddenly seized his hand and carried it to her mouth with a gesture of irresistible force. The softness of her lips, the artless candor of that expression of gratitude touched the young man. It required all his courage to withdraw his hand and say in a severe tone:

"You made me tell a great lie, my child, but don't do it again; I shall not lie a second time."

She stood before him, very humble, and made no reply. Through the door, which the keeper had left open, they could hear the well-chain creaking and the water splashing in the darkness. Danjou continued:

"Why did you go to that man's house? For you were there and you had hardly gone away when I arrived. What did you go there for? Your sister had forbidden you."

The great black eyes fastened themselves upon him, heart-rendingly sad and motionless, but lighted by a gleam of indignation when he asked if, by chance, that old owl had taken it into his head to become her gallant, her *câlineur*.

"No, it's impossible, is n't it? Then what can have taken you to that peddler of green balm? You don't choose to tell me? Very good! I know what it is. I have guessed."

The child trembled so that she had to lean against the chair on which he was sitting. He dropped his book, and said in a low tone, very close to her ear:

"Your trouble has returned, has n't it? You have begun to see things again? It's that, Zia, is n't it? Tell me, my little sister in fever and misery. — And in a fit of despair, some evening when you saw no stars, when the music of the *Félibres* did n't reach your heart, you remembered Arlatan's miracles and you went to ask him to cure you. Tell me, is n't all that I say true?"

Until now she had kept her eyes lowered, weeping noiselessly, and moving her head as if to say: "That is it, that is just it." But at Henri's last words she raised her eyes, glistening with tears, with an expression of astonishment and misery which he did not understand, which he could not understand, in the outflow of his compassion, in his longing to restore this mysteriously wounded childish heart to life and health. A longing the more intense in that by reviving her he comforted himself; and when he said to Zia: "Do not despair, little one, this is only a trial, a crisis that will pass away," he was encouraging his own distress.

Unluckily, when Charlon had returned and

gone away again with his sister-in-law, Madeleine's lover could think of nothing but his mistress, and his martyrdom began anew. He tried to read, reopened Aubanel's poem at the beautiful *canzone* which Zia's appearance had interrupted: "Since she has gone and my mother is dead," etc. — but, when he reached the last lines: "Oh! how sweet it is to sleep in the sheepfolds on the leaves, to sleep a dreamless sleep amid the flock," the words trembled and became blurred; and instead of seeing a star between the lines, Madeleine Ogé of the Délassements appeared to him, dragging her stage finery through Arlatan's feeding-trough, saturated with the musty odor of the herd. Two days in the pastures with that cow-herd! — she must have the tastes of an animal! "Oh! to wander in the company of shepherds, to lie at full length all the day and smell the sweet wild mint."

He closed the book angrily and said to himself that it would be much better to sleep. But bed makes our imaginations so active and us so cowardly! He had no sooner lain down than he was assailed anew by uncertainty. So many other strange women must have been at Arles on that holiday. Why persist in thinking that it must have been she and no other? Arlatan had not mentioned the word actress. Of all the accumulated proofs of a moment before, not a single one would hold water now. But the next moment all his suspicions came rushing back into his head and made a noise beneath his temples like the beating

of black wings by a great hurly-burly of crows coming from all parts of the sky at once. She! it was she! and he was bathed in icy perspiration.

The night passed in these feverish paroxysms, intensified by this one thought more agonizing than all the rest: "The proof is at my hand, I have only to take a step to obtain it!" The torture was so keen, so excruciating, that he leaped out of bed two or three times, saying: "I will go there," opened the door, and, failing to see the faintest gleam along the horizon, resumed his horizontal vigil in darkness and gnawing pain.

In the morning, however, while not absolutely falling asleep, he glided from insomnia into a half-dreaming state, due to fatigue. It was Camargue, but Camargue in summer, at the time of the wild-duck shooting, when the ponds are dry and the white mud of the canals cracks in the intense heat. The ponds here and there smoked like huge vats, retaining in their depths a remnant of life, a swarming mass of salamanders, spiders, and water insects seeking moist corners. And over it all a pestilential air, a mist heavy with miasma and made dense by eddying millions of mosquitoes; and the only character on that vast and dismal stage was a woman — Madeleine Ogé, with Naïs's headdress and her yellow, wrinkled cheeks, — Madeleine panting and shivering on the seashore, beneath the inexorable sun which burns the fever-stricken without warming them.

The shrill cries of a flock of early birds flying

over set him free from his nightmare. The flock was flying low, as if at the end of its day's journey, and headed for the Vacarès. An excellent pretext, which the *Franciot* seized, for taking boots, game-bag and gun and going off toward Arlatan's pasture-land to lie in wait for a shot.

CHAPTER V.

"COME in, the key's in the door."

Danjou turned the wooden key, took a step or two into the dark, smoky hovel, then stopped, blinded and choking.

"It's the wind blowing down the chimney. There's a regular squall," said the voice of the herder, still in bed and groaning under a pile of blankets and old clothes. "Ah! is it you, my good friend? look out for the stool; put your gun against the table. Did you hear how early the Faraman cow got up this morning? and my *rheumatiz* got up with it. Oh! oh! you don't seem to have slept well either, friend. You're as white as the dead. If your heart says the word, do as I do, *vé!*"

He rose painfully to a sitting posture, stirring up with every movement a yeasty odor as of hot straw, took from a rough shelf above his head a tin box-lid even full of a greenish opiate of his own manufacture, which he voluptuously lapped up with a blood-red, muddy tongue like a sick lion's.

Danjou standing at some distance from the bed, excused himself on the ground that his heart did not seem to say the word.

"I thought as much, I thought as much," muttered Arlatan, burying himself under the bedclothes; "you did n't come here for my drugs, not you."

He lay on his back, motionless and silent, his large, prematurely aged features convulsed by suffering, as if each gust that shook the house passed through his body too, and twisted and paralyzed his muscles. They could hear the thatched roof crack, the traditional wooden cross at the peak creak and groan, and, in the pasture all about, the jingling bells of the horses as they galloped hither and thither, alarmed by the absence of their master and by the fierce gusts from the sea. When the paroxysm of pain was allayed, the herder slowly opened his eyes.

"You came for that lady's portrait, did n't you?" he said to Danjou. "The Parisian lady undressed down to here. I saw at once that that would interest you."

He put out a hairy, brick-colored arm, seamed with deep, white scars made by horns.

"If you 'll be so good, comrade — that trunk with the gilt nails yonder — perhaps you 'll pull it up against me here; we are sure to find what you want there."

"For God's sake, what does the idiot think I want?" thought Danjou, as he moved the trunk to the bed and raised its huge dome-shaped lid. He had a sudden impression as of entering a herborist's establishment. Dried flowers, dead plants, butterflies and locusts preserved in camphor and

alcohol, opiates, elixirs, silver paper, a few shells, bits of mother-of-pearl and coral, — those are what first caught one's eye in that species of Mohican chest, that thieving magpie's nest which the *Anti-Glaireux* called his Treasure. Leaning over them with the gloating eyes of an inventor and a miser, he stammered, moistening his lips: —

"There are some of my drugs in there — the herb that cures and the herb that kills!"

His greedy nostrils went from one phial to another, drawing in long, luxurious breaths; then, as if his customer's feverish impatience delighted him, he dallied over the corners where the medals were, dwelt upon his triumphs as a *toreador*, commemorated by an endless number of cockades — faded ribbons, and tarnished gilt — each of which had its history, told with much boasting and parade.

This one came from the Roman, not the Roman of to-day, but another; there is always a Roman in the herds. This big one, with blood on the edge, was responsible for his memento of Musulman and of the fair lady in question. "Those Parisian women are n't cold about the eyes. Judge for yourself. The evening after the bull-fight, there was a great banquet in my honor at the Forum Club. After dinner all the men, they were sitting around me, smoking, in a salon all gold and mirrors and candles, when the lady comes up to me, a superb woman with diamonds raining sparks on her full, round shoulders. She fixes her eyes full on mine and says to me like this, before everybody: —

"'Drover, did no one ever tell you that you were very handsome?' Ah! the hussy! to dare to speak to a man that way. I felt the blood coming up into my cheeks and I retorted: —

"'Did no one ever tell you that you were a whore, madame?'"

Danjou felt his cheeks turn pale. That cool impertinence was so like his mistress!

"And she did n't take it ill of you?" he asked.

"Take it ill of me, young man? Wait." He sat up, groaning, his coarse linen shirt open so that one could see the gray, hairy breast. "Pass me those two boxes, please, — the green one and the other."

He pointed to two pasteboard boxes of the sort that the great dry-goods shops ship to the ends of the earth. They were dirty, broken, covered with all sorts of postal marks, and held together only by a miracle. From the first, which he opened almost without touching it, dropped photographs of women — actresses and ballet-dancers, muffled and *décolletées*, as we see them in show-windows — and covered the blanket in front of him. He took one of them and gazed at it a long while. Danjou was too far away, he could not see the woman; but of his *Anti-Glaireux* in woollen and yarn, holding the little card in his short, thick, black-nailed fingers, not a detail escaped him. And as he recalled his mistress's essential daintiness and refinement, the association of the two seemed to him monstrous, impossible.

"Just look at that, my son," said the ex-cattle drover, passing him the portrait.

It was indeed Madeleine Ogé, ten years earlier, at the zenith of her beauty and her glory: Madeleine as Camargo, the most voluptuous of her rôles and her costumes. Below, lest any one should remain in ignorance of her identity, was a line of her long, wavy capricious handwriting, advertising the public homage which she paid to a vaquero with that divine mouth, that flawless bosom: —

"To the Handsomest of Camarguese,
His Camargo."

Was it the soiled, yellowed paper; was it the nauseating odor of drugs? At first he had no sensation save one of disgust. And he had expected to suffer so keenly and had braced himself in anticipation of the shock! And with the picture before him, the last vestige of doubt being removed, he rejoiced in that absence of pain.

"How much do you want for this portrait?" he asked in an indifferent tone. "I'll give you ten pistoles for it, a hundred francs."

Ten pistoles! The Camarguais leaped for joy under his bedclothes.

"A fine bit of female flesh, eh?" he said, smacking his tongue, and leering lustfully. "But I can give you something much better for the same price. Yes, yes, you shall see —"

He took from the other box and arranged carefully on his bed several of the great chromos which adorn the show-windows of the dealers in *santibelli* on the old quays of Genoa or Marseille, —

Daphnis and Chloë, Leda's swan, Adam and Eve before the fall, ostentatious nudities of obscene implication, especially in their coloring and dimensions.

"Take your pick, my dear friend; you'll find nothing finer in the way of *gallant* pictures."

Oh! the accent, the twist of the tongue with which he dwelt upon the words: *gallant pictures.* And it was in that mass of ordure that Madeleine figured!

"Very pretty, Master Arlatan," muttered Danjou absent-mindedly, barely glancing at them, engrossed by the little picture about which his fingers were clinched. "But this woman's portrait is all that I happen to want. Let us say no more about it."

The peasant insisted, dazzled by the ten pistoles. In the first place the lady was only half-naked, while the others —; and then she had written her name at the bottom of the card. Perhaps this Camargo lady was still living and might cause him some annoyance.

The bright light from without suddenly poured into the room and caused them both to raise their heads. The door, being insecurely fastened doubtless, had suddenly swung wide open. They could see the low-hanging clouds scudding across the sky, the horses scattered about the moor, their arched backs and the ends of their white manes showing here and there behind a clump of tamarisk; and farther on, above the noisy Vacarès, all gleaming with scales, were flocks of birds soar-

ing, plunging, fishing, flapping their wings in the wind.

"Put the key on the inside; we shall be more private," said the herder in a low tone.

But Danjou rejoined shortly:

"It's useless. I will go, as you don't choose to part with it."

The other turned livid with wrath.

"Come, my dear friend, consider."

"I have considered. I wanted that portrait, you too want it. Here are twenty francs for your trouble, and *au revoir*, my man."

After all, was not the feeling of deathly disgust which he carried from the hut of more value to him than all the photographs in the world? With the picture constantly before his eyes that feeling might grow weaker; perhaps too he might not have resisted the temptation to taste the joy of reprisals, as by sending the diva that memento of her youth. And then all his efforts would be thrown away, his hiding-place betrayed; there would be letters and tears and at the end probably the eternal relapse. No, no, stay with your Camarguais, my girl; continue to mould among the green balms, in the capacity of "gallant picture!"

Danjou reflected thus as he bent his steps toward the Vacarès, where he expected to hunt for an hour or two; but a number of horses, clustered together in his path, scattered as he approached. Zia was sitting on the mist-drenched turf, a basket full of large loaves at her side, and she was mechanically

tossing bits of bread to the horses. Her neck was bare, her cloak unbuckled, her feet half protruding from little yellows clogs of willow wood, and her lips purple with cold; the constant repetition of the same movement with her hand, trying to replace the locks of hair that had escaped from her cap, gave her a sort of wild look. She simply raised her head when the *Franciot* spoke to her.

"What are you doing there, Zia?"

"Nothing — I don't know."

"What! you don't know what you are doing, so far from home? What 's all this bread?"

"They sent me to Chartrouse for the bread."

"Chartrouse? But this is hardly the way home from Chartrouse."

Danjou's eyes, as he glanced inquiringly about, fell upon the herder's hut. He understood instantly.

"Do not lie to me: you were going there."

"Yes, I was," she replied vehemently. "All you said to me last evening, all my prayers during the night did no good at all. An evil force seized me when I left Chartrouse and dragged me to that man's house — how, I don't know. The key was in the lock and I opened the door; but I heard voices, so I ran as far as this for fear of being seen."

She rose and picked up her basket of bread.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I am going home, my sister will be anxious." She hesitated, then added: "Shall you tell her you saw me?"

"No, if you will promise me —"

She looked at him with a weary, heart-broken expression that would have moved a stone to pity.

"What do you want me to promise? Can I do it? Can I be sure of it? There are times when I am not myself, when flames pass through me and carry me away. When you are here, it is all right, I feel strength to resist — but an hour from now, you will have left me and nothing can keep me back. And I don't come to Arlatan for a cure, as you seem to think: I come for the poison, to be scorched and burned. My eyes begin to ache with the longing to see things. And the man shows them to me and I am damned. Ah! I tell you the best way would be to tell Naïs everything, let her beat me, kill me, but keep me from ever coming here again."

While she was speaking, Danjou, remembering the hideous chromos spread out on the drover's bed, seemed to see them again in the wicked, sinister light in which they would appear to this child-woman's feverish eyes and her sickly imagination.

"No, Zia," he said, overflowing with pity, "no, your sister shall know nothing about it — it would distress her too much; but you must return to your own home, leave here as soon as possible."

"Go home!" she cried in terror. "Blessed Mother of the Angels! why, that will be the end of everything, they will point at me and run after me on account of the *bon jour*. And yet you 're right, Monsieur Henri, there's nothing to do but go away. That's the very best thing."

Straight and slender, her great basket on her hip, her hair like golden dust about her little cap, she walked into the teeth of the wind, with her skirts twining about her shapely legs, and the shadow at her side repeating her emphatic gesture: "to go away! to go away!"

CHAPTER VI.

MONSIEUR T. DE LOGERET, Montmajour.

At last, after two long days of agonizing suspense and searching, we have found the poor child; we found her on the shore of the Vacarès, which has kept her all this time, cradled and swathed in its mysterious waves. The first day the Charlons were not greatly alarmed by her disappearance. She was an odd, whimsical creature, with a delirious, what you might call a bewitched imagination, a little demoniac, who would have been exorcised in the Middle Ages, and whom Naïs in her ignorance frightened with continual scenes. They supposed that on account of one of these scenes Zia had run away to her own home, and you can imagine their dismay when they found that no one had seen her at Montmajour. They inquired at all the farms in the neighborhood, and all the herders dragged the ponds and irrigating canals with their long three-pronged spears.

At night there was a great clamor and blowing of horns all over the marshes; torches and lanterns flickered in the water.

Ah! the fine fellows! How deeply I am impressed by the generous, kindly nature of all these ignorant country folk, shepherds and drovers with scarred faces, as bronzed and hard as helmets; by their brotherly sympathy with the distress of one of themselves, giving unstintedly of their hours for sleep, their compassion, their fatigue! And there was a genuine tempest throughout the three days! High winds, lightning, hail, the sea

and the Vacarès raging, the herds frightened out of their wits, flying before the gusts or crowded close about their leader, with lowered heads, "turning their horns to the storm-cloud," as you say. It was heathenishly grand, the uprising of all this wild landscape in revolt against the injustice of the gods who permitted that child's suicide; for she killed herself, unhappy creature, and if you knew what an extraordinary, cruel obsession it was from which she sought to escape!

On the morning of the third day Charlon and I were searching the shores of the pond when we saw a troop of wild horses standing on the very edge. They were gazing at our poor Zia, who lay stretched on the fine grass, wrapped as in a winding-sheet in her long cloak, heavy with salt and mud. Her pretty face was white and unmarred, and in the half-open eyes could still be read the same heartrending expression; from remaining a long while in the water the eyes had become green, as when she wept. Ah! but such a green! "Two little *rainettes* from the great pond," said Charlon, with a sob.

Being an old Camarguais, my dear fellow, you must have heard of Arlatan's Treasure. Little Zia died because she longed to look at it; while I, on the contrary, hope that I have found in it a cure and renewed life. I shall know in a few weeks. I was warned, however, by these words of the herder:

"I have in my treasure the herb that cures and the herb that kills."

Does not this Treasure of Arlatan's resemble our composite and diversified imagination, which it is so dangerous to explore to its lowest depths? Of such exploration one may die or live.

Farewell for a short time, old Tim; I embrace you with a heavy heart. HENRI DANJOU.

LA FÉDOR

PAGES FROM LIFE.

LA FÉDOR.

I.

"FRANÇOIS, here is Monsieur Veillon!"

At that hasty summons from the slender young woman who made her appearance between the boxes of flowers on the front stoop, François du Bréau stood erect on the lawn where he was playing with his little daughter and came forward to meet his visitor, with one hand extended, the other holding the child on his shoulder, where she laughed merrily and tossed her little pink-shod feet about in the sunshine.

"Ah! it's Monsieur Veillon — very well, Monsieur Veillon shall be admitted. But what a shameful thing! three months without coming to Château-Fraye, without once letting us hear — "

He stopped at the foot of the steps, struck by the embarrassed, distressed expression, the look of confusion, of longing to be somewhere else, which the necessity of lying imparted to the round, kindly, moustachioed face of the oldest and best friend of his youth.

"Have you something to say to me?"

"Yes — not before your wife."

The words were exchanged, whispered as they nervously shook hands; but not until the breakfast

hour were the two friends left alone for a moment. When the nurse had carried away "Mademoiselle," all her charms having been exhibited to Monsieur, he must inspect the estate, which had been greatly changed, greatly improved in the last few months. This Château-Fraye, which gave its name to Madame du Bréau's family, was a domain of great antiquity, half donjon, half refinery, flanked by a massive tower and by a park with trees dating from feudal times, where a mammoth chimney poured forth its smoke over endless plains of wheat, barley and beets; except for the reddish glow which Paris kindled every evening on the horizon, one might have fancied oneself in the heart of Artois or Sologne. There, ever since their marriage two years before, the Marquis du Bréau and his young wife, his "little Château-Fraye," as he called her, had lived in a solitude as exclusive as their love.

As they were about to take their places at the table, the nurse appeared once more; she came to call Madame to the child.

"This *nounou*[1] represents a type," said the young mother unconcernedly, "she is the peasant woman with scruples — one is never free from her. Finish your breakfast, messieurs, I beg, don't wait for me."

As she left the table she smiled prettily in the security of happiness. As the door closed behind her, the husband instantly asked:

"What's the matter?"

"Louise is dead," his friend replied gravely.

[1] Nurse.

The other did not understand at first.

"Why, Loulou, you know — La Fédor."

François seized his friend's hand nervously under the table.

"Dead! are you sure?"

And when his friend answered affirmatively with an emphatic nod, Du Bréau uttered not a sigh, but a cry, a bray of relief:

"At last!"

That outburst of joy in the face of death was so pitilessly selfish — especially with regard to a woman like La Fédor, the famous actress, admired and coveted of all men, whom he had held against his heart for six years — that he felt ashamed and embarrassed, tried to excuse himself:

"It's horrible, is n't it? but if you knew how unhappy she made me at the time of our separation, with her frantic letters, her threats, her constant waiting in front of my door. Six months before my wedding and ten months, yes, fifteen months after, I lived in a constant state of terror and dread, dreaming of nothing but murder, suicide, vitriol and revolvers. She had sworn that she would die, but would kill everybody first — the man, the wife, even the child, if I had one. And to any one who knew her well, there was nothing extravagant about her threats. I could not take my poor wife anywhere, nor go out on foot with her, without a dread of some ridiculous or tragic scene. And why should it be? What claim had she on my life? I owed her nothing, at all events no more than others, than so many others. I had been too

attentive, that was all. And then I was young, I did not belong to her world of authors and strolling players. She expected something more from me — marriage, perhaps, and my name. Such things have been known. Ah! poor Loulou, I bear her no grudge for it now, but how she did pester me! My friends were astonished at this interminable wedding-journey; they can understand it now, and why, instead of returning to Paris, I came and shut myself up here, seized with a sudden passion for scientific farming. Even here I was not always free from anxiety, and when the bell at the main gateway on the road rang very loud or at unusual hours, my heart would leap in my breast and I would say to myself: 'There she is!'"

Veillon, who, while eating with a healthy appetite, listened attentively to these confidences interrupted by the going and coming of the servants, replied in a reproachful tone:

"Well, you can sleep in peace now — she died day before yesterday at Wissous, at her sister's, who took her in four months ago when her disease took a turn for the worse."

Du Bréau felt a thrill of remorse. Ill, and so near to him, only a few leagues away, and he had known nothing of it.

"How did you learn that she was there?"

"She wrote me to come and see her. I found her in the most bourgeois surroundings, most contrary to her nature, living with Marie Fédor, who once won the prize in tragedy, now Madame Restouble, wife of the notary of Wissous."

"But they detested each other."

"Oh! Loulou was very unjust. She bore her sister a grudge for turning her back on the stage to marry her student of the good old days at the Conservatoire."

Du Bréau began to laugh.

"Her student? Which one? She had more than twenty."

"She married only one, however, Maître Restouble, whose escutcheon has shone resplendent on the prettiest little house in Wissous for I don't know how many generations. That is where I found your former flame."

"Why did n't you tell me of it?"

"Because you are married, because you love your wife — that past life of yours had no interest for you. But to-day—" Veillon hesitated a second, then, still very coldly, but with a visible quivering of his heavy brown moustache:

"The funeral is to be at three o'clock. I promised that you should be there."

François du Bréau had no time to reply; his wife entered the room, less radiant than a moment before, with an anxious expression in her pretty eyes. For once the nurse was right; the child's eyelids were burning hot and so were her little hands.

"Oh! it will not amount to anything," added the mother hastily, misunderstanding the embarrassment and alarm which she divined around the table.

"That is not what disturbs us," said her hus-

band; "but I have just learned of a death — some one whom I knew very intimately."

"Who is it, pray?"

Veillon came to his friend's rescue. It was one of their old school-fellows at Louis-le-Grand, Georges Hofer, at whose house they used sometimes to breakfast on Sunday, in their younger days. His parents, who were brewers on a large scale, had their brewery on the other side of the Seine, in the vast plains which extend to Montlhéry. He had died there and was to be buried that day.

Madame du Bréau looked at her husband.

"You never mentioned this Georges Hofer to me."

"It's a long time since I saw him," he replied.

"Never mind," interposed Veillon, very seriously, "you will do well to come."

And his wife said, even more seriously:

"You must go, my dear."

The sweet, compassionate tone in which she said it touched them both. They spoke of it an hour later in the Grande-Ceinture train which took them to Juvisy, where the plains of Wissous begin.

"Do you suppose she suspected anything?" queried Veillon.

Du Bréau thought not.

"She would have told me. She is a transparent, earnest creature, incapable of concealing anything. La Fédor used to say sometimes: 'I am a good fellow, you can trust me.'—A good fellow, I grant you, but a cursed woman all the same, who, as she was born in the gutter and never had anything to

guide her but her instincts as a prostitute and actress, imagined that all women were like her, only more foolish and more wicked, and tried to make me believe it. If I had not had the good fortune to meet my little Château-Fraye and to go mad over her at once, on my word, I might have ended by marrying her."

"You would n't have had very much of her, however," murmured Veillon with a heart-rending smile. "Poor Louise was doomed."

"Why, what did she die of? I left her in the best of health and as vigorous as possible."

His friend, leaning on the window-sill and looking out, muttered a few words under his moustache: exhaustion, bronchitis not properly treated — no one knew just what it was. There was a moment's silence; then, when the station of Juvisy was announced, Veillon said:

"We must get out here; we will walk the rest of the way."

Beneath a July sky, white hot, a sky of molten sunshine, the king's pavement, as it is still called, stretched away interminably, lined with stunted elms and monumental milestones. At intervals, beside the ditch-banks covered with closely-cropped scorched grass, a commemorative stone post or iron cross marked the spot where such and such a person, market-gardener of this or that town in Seine-et-Oise, returning home from the market at Paris, was crushed to death by the wheels of his wagon.

"Fatigue or drink, sometimes both," murmured Veillon.

And Du Bréau rejoined in an indifferent tone:

"Talking of drink, what about Louise's musician, do you hear anything of him? You know whom I mean, that Desvarennes, the orchestra leader who consoled her at last in her widowhood? It seems that they used to fight and get tipsy on absinthe every night."

Veillon turned on him sharply: —

"Who told you that? Who saw her? And even suppose it were true? La Fédor was an artist of great talent none the less, a beautiful girl and a good girl, who loved you as well as she knew how, and that is certainly worth the two or three hours you are giving her to-day."

Having reached the end of the king's pavement, the two friends took one of the innumerable country roads, burning hot and thick with dust, which run hither and thither as far as the eye can see among the fields of rye and wheat, dazzling and quivering with heat in the bright sun. The air was scorching. Here and there a church steeple, the white glare of a rough-cast wall interrupted the unbroken line of the horizon; but the road they were following never went in the direction of the steeple or the wall.

"You are not going to lose your way, are you?" said Du Bréau to his companion, who had halted in front of a sign-post at the junction of two roads.

Veillon reassured him; he knew the road from Wissous to Château-Fraye very well, having recently driven over it with Louise.

"For, just imagine, my dear fellow, the poor

girl had but one object, one hope in taking refuge with her sister, whom she detested, whom she believed to be her most deadly enemy, and that was to see you again. On my first visit she broached the subject to me: 'You see, my little Veillon,' she said, with the artless grace which suffering had restored to her, 'it was n't possible for him to come and see me when I was leading a vicious life, living in Bohemia; but here, with people who are married, in a magistrate's house — great God! my sister tells me often enough that her husband 's a magistrate — there is nothing to keep him away, is there?' — Ah! the unhappy girl — what a hard time I had convincing her that she was dreaming of something that was impossible, that a man of honor like you could not do that, certainly would not do it, — and, after all, I failed to convince her."

Du Bréau, who had stopped to light a cigarette, murmured after a moment's pause: —

"But why should we meet? What could we have said to each other?"

"Oh! I know well enough what she would have said to you, and why she was so bent upon seeing you before she died."

"Why?"

"She wanted to ask you to forgive her. Yes, to forgive her letters, her threats, all the insane freaks with which she persecuted you. I confess that, in the face of her distress and remorse, I lied abominably to poor Loulou, making her believe that everything was forgiven and forgotten. But don't imagine that I got out of the difficulty with that!

When she fully understood that you would not come to Wissous, that you could not come, then she sang another song. Your life at Château-Fraye, your household, did you have music in the evening, did the little girl look like you — there was no end to her questions. As soon as I arrived it was impossible to talk to her about anything else. And one day she informed us that she wanted to see your house, just the walls, just the tops of the trees. It was then that I realized how entirely mistaken she was about her sister. Prostrated and ill as she was, she could not be taken on the train; she must make the whole journey in a carriage, stretched out on the cushions. I can fairly say that Marie Fédor was wonderfully patient and gentle, and that, except for her, Louise would never have been able to gratify her whim. A genuine journey it was, long and tiresome. But it all seemed magically beautiful to her; that first breath of spring, eager and joyous, the new grass appearing in all the fields, everything combined to intoxicate her. We stopped at the Bois-Margot, left the carriage there and took a cross-road overgrown with brambles, what the road-menders call a dead road. It skirts the park of Château-Fraye, and we all three crept along close to the walls, which were hot with the sun. I was afraid of being seen by one of your farmers or by some workman from the refinery; they all know me. Luckily it was in working hours. She was excited at the idea that that enormous flock in the pasture, that shepherd, those great dogs, were yours. 'How I am

enjoying myself! How glad I am!' she said to me, clapping her hands like a child. When we drew near the avenue, her excitement became even more intense. You know that at intervals in the wall there is a high iron gate which affords a glimpse of the double avenue of lindens separated by a broad lawn. We stood at one of them looking through the bars, inhaling the fragrance of all that new spring vegetation luxuriating in the sunshine, when I recognized your wife's voice in the distance, and saw her coming toward us with the nurse and the child. I had barely time to step aside, leaving Louise in her sister's arms motionless behind the gate. I did not remove my eyes from her. When your wife passed, walking backwards with tiny steps before the child, she made no sign, not a feature stirred. But it was a ghastly sight, those thin, haggard cheeks, that death mask gazing through the impassable iron bars at the most beautiful spectacle on earth, at all that could cause her envy and regret, happy motherhood and infancy. But when she saw the little one trotting by in her long frock, how that poor incurable invalid's face brightened up! She laughed, she wept, and said in a low tone to her sister as she wiped her eyes: 'Oh! do look at her, the darling! she has hair of the same shade as her father's, and it curls like his. Oh! the darling, the darling!' — Her emotion was so keen, she trembled so from head to foot, holding out her hands, that we had to tear her away, to lead her back to the carriage, where she fell on the seat utterly exhausted. She did not utter a single

word during the whole drive home; she lay back with her eyes closed, breathing a bouquet of yellow flowers from the tall ebony-tree that overhangs the refinery wall. On the following Sunday when I arrived — I had fallen into the habit of going to see her every Sunday — I found her as always in the garden, stretched out in a great easy-chair upholstered in pale green, in which her hollow face, her thin arms, her long hands gave her a lamentable appearance of prostration. It seemed to me as if I were looking at her in that last act of *La Dame*, in which Desclée alone could be compared with her. — 'I shall not try it again,' she said, referring to her visit to Château-Fraye. 'I suffered too much, I am completely done up.' — Lowering her voice because of the gardener, who was raking close by, she added: 'My sister knew very well what she was about when she suggested that journey to me — she turned the knife in my heart, and the blade has remained there.' — Was there ever such injustice! That poor Marie Fédor, devoted to her every hour in the day, should be suspected of such scheming, such complicated perfidy! — However, you will see Madame Restouble, you will see for yourself what a dear, delightful creature she is, as little like the monster Louise described to us as the pretty house before us is like the prison in which the poor girl pretended that she had shut herself up for love of you."

The notary's very venerable house, small and low, with its freshly whitewashed walls, its freshly painted blinds and its gleaming escutcheon, stood

at the very entrance of the village, at the rear of a small courtyard filled with flowers and brilliant with an enormous bed of geraniums. Despite the mourning within the house and the frame of black cloth around the door, the office, which was well provided with clients, was not idle that day, and through the blinds, only half-closed, one could see profiles bending over documents, and hear a youthful voice dictating, amid the scratching of goose-quills busily engrossing.

In the lower hall, with its cool, resonant tiled floor, a trestle awaited the coffin; at the end of the hall was a glass door through which could be seen the green paths in the garden and the black figures of the guests.

"Stay here," said Veillon, leaving his friend in the courtyard, "the coffin has not come down yet. I am going to ask permission to see her. I think there is still time."

Deeply moved by the thought of that last interview, Du Bréau was beginning to lose patience as he walked in and out, among the geraniums, listening to the whispering of the clerks in the office behind him.

"Are we to go up?" he asked his friend, who appeared at last under the funeral drapery.

Veillon stammered.

"It 's of no use — we cannot — it 's too late."

The other, not observing his embarrassment, naturally suggested that they go into the garden with the other guests; perhaps he was not sorry,

after all, to escape that painful meeting which he imposed upon himself as a duty to some extent, after what he had just learned of Louise's last days and of the sacrifice she had made for him in coming to live and die at her sister's. But his amazement was unbounded when he saw that Veillon instead of leading the way, stood facing him, confused but motionless, as if to prevent his going any farther.

"What 's the matter?" he said at last.

And his friend, finding words with difficulty, with evident embarrassment in his voice and in his glance, replied:

"My dear fellow, it 's absurd — but you know what a state grief puts women in. Here is Marie Fédor, Madame Restouble, usually so amiable, angry with you for letting her sister die without coming once to see her. It was of no use for me to tell her again and again in every key that you could n't do it, that even what you have done to-day is imprudent because of its possible effect on your wife and your happiness. — No use! She is furious, she does n't want to see you, she would rather not come down at all."

"Then what? — must I go away?"

Veillon hesitated.

"I don't know what to say. When I think that I have made you take this long journey, and that she won't even allow you the privilege — "

"Of going to the cemetery?" said François du Bréau, smiling sadly. "What can you expect? perhaps it is better so. I will return home slowly

across those same great fields, living over those few years, that deplorable fragment of my life which is to be buried here."

He raised his eyes to a window on the first floor, where the white curtain, raised in curiosity, fell back at once against the glass. Louise's sister was watching the effect of her refusal; to remain there longer would have been really too cowardly.

"But it's impossible, you can't go back alone," said Veillon, accompanying his friend toward the street. "We must return together."

"No, no. Stay, I insist upon it. You must be here, you must take my place to the last, especially if it be true — as you say — that the poor girl thought of me in her last moments. Come, go in at once, and *au revoir*. Now we shall see you on Sundays again, I fancy."

Du Bréau opened the wooden gate, and, more moved than he cared to show, strode away from the notary's office.

II.

THE whole village, men and cattle, was in the fields at that hour. Where? in what fields? Doubtless between those ridges in the ground, where the recumbent flocks assumed from a distance the aspect of a furrow, and the men, taking their noon-day rest, that of a rut; for he had seen, on his way thither, naught save an immense glare of light in all the parched and deserted plain.

After passing several white and silent lanes, with low houses and uneven stony pavements, where the heat, blended with the stale smell of cow-shed and farm-yard, seemed heavier than in the open country, he suddenly found himself in front of the church, an ancient, squat little church, with its Roman doorway draped with black cloth and bearing the same silver letters, L. F., which he had seen on the notary's house. A stone cross surrounded by a quincunx of stunted lindens, as heavy and immovable as it, stood opposite the church door. On the small square two showmen's vans without horses, which had been standing there since the local fête, were sleeping in the heavy atmosphere. The clock struck four; and immediately thereafter the slow notes of a funeral knell tolling at regular intervals from the church tower, announced the approach of the procession.

He was suddenly seized with a desire to see it pass. But where could he stand and not be seen? In a corner of the square, behind several boxes of rose-laurels, he spied a mouldy wine-shop reached by a flight of four steps. He entered and was served at a table near a window. Two sallow itinerant showmen, with adventurers' faces, were standing at the counter drinking, watching out of the corners of their eyes their show-wagons standing under the trees on the square, and describing to each other in a loud voice their misfortunes, the trials, great and small, of their profession.

As he entered, Du Bréau heard the older of the two say to the other in a tone of conviction born of experience:

"Put epaulets on your Jean-Jean;[1] that will give you the colonel you need."

He at once thought how Louise would have laughed at that strolling impresario's remark; she was so fond of those Delobelles of the high roads. And at a table near his own there was another man, with a blue chin, who seemed to belong to the same category of bohemian mountebanks, albeit a little less poverty-stricken than the others. Instead of the cloth shoes and coarse shirt, of the color of scorched paper, worn by the two showmen, he wore polished shoes, white garters, a new broadcloth suit, and on his head a tall flat-brimmed hat surrounded by an enormous band of crêpe, tilted back so as to disclose, beneath a mass of grizzly curls, which looked almost as if they were pow-

[1] Raw recruit.

dered, a high, pale, pyramidal forehead, red eyes burned with alcohol, flabby, trembling cheeks, furrowed by the deep wrinkles due to the extraction of the back teeth; a majestic white cravat of the style worn by men of the law in old times put the finishing touch to the unusual appearance of this personage, who was sipping from a glass as thick and heavy as an earthenware cup a concoction of absinthe of which a swarm of wasps were disputing possession. Opposite him a girl of ten or twelve, dressed in black like her father, with the same tired, bloated features, the same watery eyes, was seated between two small boys, also in mourning and dressed like men, over whom the big sister kept watch with the authoritative manner and the precautions of a mother, cutting their bread, filling their glasses, cutting the cheese in equal portions, and, in her haste to give a mouthful to her famished little charges, forgetting that she herself had not eaten or drunk since morning. Around the great slice of Brie cheese on the table before them, between a loaf and the absinthe bottle, a whole swarm of wasps was buzzing, as on the edge of the paternal glass of absinthe; but they were very far from spoiling the children's appetites, and their father's skill in spearing the wasps on the wing with the cheese-knife, and cutting them in two despite the alcoholic trembling of his hand, diverted them hugely; and with eyes like saucers and mouths full, they amused themselves watching the wasps, as with their bodies cut in two and the parts connected by a single membrane, they dragged them-

selves along, writhing in agony on the edge of the plate of cheese, which was black with the crawling mass. Du Bréau watched that childish scene with the close attention which our mind gives to the most trivial things when it is deeply absorbed. Suddenly the man with the white garters, holding his hat in one hand and his glass of absinthe in the other, walked toward him with the courtesies and evolutions of a dancing-master, swaying from side to side and stumbling.

"Marquis François du Bréau, if I am not mistaken. I recognized you the moment you came in, from the portrait Louise always wore."

He interrupted himself to place his glass on Du Bréau's table — the marquis had suddenly turned very pale — and introduced himself in a thick, pretentious voice:

"Desvarennes, orchestra leader, Desvarennes the musician, pupil of Niedermeyer, the author of Lamartine's *Lac*, am myself the composer of several melodies; — but I beg your pardon, Monsieur le Marquis, I am detaining you. Perhaps you wish to go out and join the procession?— No? They must have played the same game on you as on us; forbade you to follow. Why, I pray to know? As for me, any one can understand that; I was Loulou's vice, her degradation. But you, and these poor children — for they're my progeny, that tall, homely creature with a face like a sick rabbit and those absurd little gauchos with their trousers dragging on the ground — why punish them, I ask you, why not let them follow to the end the woman

who was so kind to them? It is n't because they 're poorly dressed, is it? Let me tell you this, Monsieur le Marquis, the whole family is dressed in new clothes from head to foot for the ceremony. Not so much as a radish left in the house; I raked and scraped, pawned everything so that our mourning for our dear friend might be worthy of her. As I said to the little one just now:

"'Don 't let your brothers ask me for another sou's worth of bread, for I could n't give it to them.'"

He moistened the bitterness of that declaration with a long draught of absinthe and continued:

"I don 't regret the expense, the children ought to wear mourning for their mother, and Louise Fédor was a real mother to them. Indeed it was on their account that I became her — her — what I was. For it 's an extraordinary thing that a poor strolling musician, a wretched abortion like me, could ever have been the lover of that great artist, that adorable creature who had bankers, princes and kings on all fours on her bed-rug, and the greatest names on the stage at the foot of the most extravagant love-letters! This is the exact history of my rare good fortune! It was some months after her row at the Comédie-Française; in spite of everything, lack of money had compelled her to accept an offer for a tour of the watering-places, Vichy, Royat, Aix-les-Bains, where she played some of her most successful parts, in *Dora*, *Frou-Frou*, *Diane de Lys*, *La Visite*. It happened that at that time I was leading the orchestra at Vichy,

without much enthusiasm I must confess. My wife had just left me to run after my first violin, who was inclined to laugh at Madame Desvarennes and thought of nothing but card-playing. However, there I was alone at the hotel with my three little ones, the last two, the boys, being barely able to walk and talk. Luckily their sister was nine years old; at that age, they are already either strumpets or mothers, just as it happens. Two years ago that girl, as you see her, knew how to fix the milk porridge for her two little brothers at night, then undress them, tuck them carefully into bed at the hotel; and when she had put them to sleep with some nice story, she 'd come and join me in the orchestra, fearing that I 'd yield to the temptation to drink after the performance, and there she 'd sit on a little bench at my feet till it was over. When it was a long play, I would feel her little head resting heavier and heavier against my knees as I beat time. At a rehearsal of *Frou-Frou* one day, La Fédor, who had never spoken to me, came to the front of the stage and with her gloved hands in front of her eyes, because they were blinded by the footlights, she said to me: 'Desvarennes, send your little girl into my dressing-room to-night, she can sleep more comfortably there than in the orchestra on your wooden knees.' When she had the sister, it occurred to her that the little brothers in bed at the hotel all alone might wake and be afraid in their room. So she took the little ones to sleep in her dressing-room with the big one; and when she once had all the brats the father was

[illegible] — [illegible] incomparable woman! [illegible] soonest [illegible] couldn't [illegible] of Niedermey-er [illegible] What's [illegible] horses are found- [illegible] which that gener- [illegible] by no one; so [illegible] performed at her [illegible] of Saint-Eustache. All [illegible] She had no great taste for [illegible] that Monsieur [illegible] her a few months [illegible]

[illegible] his arm extended as if [illegible] expression, then [illegible]

"[illegible] of energy, of youth, that [illegible] her talent and her success [illegible] she found herself con- fronted [illegible] age, the old age of the actress and of the woman. Sickness took a hand. In a woman, I take the liberty of saying, it is almost always nothing but a visible form of great trouble, the mourning for fading charms. When I first knew her, La Fedor, being tired of life rather than ill, had taken to morphine. I showed her what a stupid, dismal effect that drug had, and that, poison for poison, nothing was equal to a good green[1] well mixed."

He took the bottle of absinthe standing on the next table, and while he filled his glass to the brim

[1] *La verte* — slang for absinthe.

with tremulous little jerks, a funeral chant suddenly arose on the square in front of the church, sung by strong country voices, badly worn, supported by the deep notes of the ophicleide and the death-knell tolling at regular intervals.

"Come, Mélie," said the drunkard, turning to his daughter, "you 've just time enough; take the boys to the church. Let everybody go in ahead of you, then kneel in the back part of the church, as far back as possible. But I insist on your going in, you understand. No one has any right to keep you from going in."

And waxing excited at the idea that the same ill-will that had closed the house of death to them might forbid them the church, he brandished the bottle, which he had not set down, and shouted in the direction of the square:

"Don't try it! oh! don't try it!"

Alarmed by that alcoholic voice, whose angry outbursts so often drove the color from her cheeks and made her leap out of bed at night, the tall sister hurriedly led away her brothers, who, for their part, thought of nothing but the bread and cheese that were left on the table at the mercy of the wasps, and went away regretfully, with heavy hearts.

At the approach of the procession, Du Bréau, already perturbed by the appearance of Desvarennes, had risen, profoundly moved, and, concealing himself behind the half-open window, watched the surplices file into the square, in a wavering double line of tapers and voices, behind the tall silver

cross; then the casket, borne by hand, beneath its fringed drapery. How heavy is the sleep of the dead! To think that it required four sturdy, muscular men, four rustics, made for hard labor, and relieving one another at that, to carry that mere wisp of a woman, that little dead star, from the house to the church and from the church to the cemetery! Suddenly, as if the casket had opened, she appeared before him, stretched out between the narrow boards, with the radiant smile that hollowed out a dimple in her cheek, and the caressing glance of her blue-gray, pearl-gray eyes with their great drooping lashes, the eyelids discolored, rouged as it were, by pleasure; but it was only a vision, driven away almost instantly by the antics of Desvarennes, who stood beside him and in his vulgar, alcoholic voice checked off the procession as it passed:

"The family, messieurs! Restouble the notary, Madame Marie Fédor, his wife, who took the first prize in tragedy, and their guests. The guests are all Loulou's ex-lovers, but only the famous ones. The Institute, the Conservatoire, but not an actor, even with the Legion of Honor; no actresses either, Madame Restouble holds the stage in horror. We have the manager of the *Fantaisies*, however, and two famous vaudevillists, Laniboire and Ripault-Babin, of the Académie-Française. A parcel of old attitudinizers! I heard them on the train coming down, boasting of the passion for each of them which consumed her. Ah! if they had known who was listening to them! Loulou

love them! No, no, my chickens, you can brag all you choose, not one of you ever had that luck — not even that fat dropsical manager, whom she made believe that he was her first lover. The fact is she never knew her first lover. One night, at a students' ball at Marie Fédor's, a medical student, disguised as a monkey, carried Loulou into her sister's room; and while the elder Fédor was amusing herself, the little one submitted, weeping, not daring to say that she was a virgin for fear of seeming a ninny. So he was her first lover, the one a woman never forgets, that anonymous gorilla — yes, messieurs, just so."

He became more animated, raised his glass and shouted so that Du Bréau was annoyed and withdrew from the window to his former seat on the bench, where the tipsy fellow joined him, with his irritating, inexhaustible flow of words:

"I hope Monsieur le Marquis is not surprised to find me so well-informed about our friend; you see, I was with her at times when she felt as if she could n't gulp her life down any longer, as the fellow said, but must throw it up. That used to take her in the evening, between daylight and dark, in the little entresol on Boulevard Poissonnière, which has seen her lying motionless for hours at a time in a very low easy chair, with the continual rumbling of carriages under her window. Then, especially when she had in her head the warmth of a good *green*, a heap of memories, of involuntary confidences would be the result of her drunkenness and of all those lights on the boulevard —

the only light that there was in her room — sparkling in her glass. I learned some funny things those evenings. And some funnier things still when the hard times, the very hard times came, and La Fédor, unable to appear on the stage, was driven to writing to her former lovers. I was the one, or, when I was too far gone with drink, my daughter, to deliver the letters. Those letters, you see, were always written to suit the tastes of the person they were sent to and, in a way, to flatter his vanity, and they were pure masterpieces. God's blood! how we used to roar with laughter sometimes when she read me one of them before sealing it. But, in the worst days of her destitution, she would never apply to you. Sometimes, in a fit of jealousy, I urged her to do it, and then she would fly out: 'No, no, I 've annoyed him enough; and then our relations were too pleasant, I don't choose to mix him up in this filth.' And when everything failed her, rather than hold out her hand to you, she preferred to come and bury herself here, with this lying, spiteful sister of hers, who always detested her on account of her triumphs and her talent, and who has taken her pay in a few months for the whole of her outstanding account of hatred and envy. Poor Louise! your life in that house with the smug, well-kept front was martyrdom, outrageous martyrdom; they must have roasted you at a slow fire, turned one side of you to it, then the other. And to-morrow all the newspapers will tell how generous your elder sister was to you. They will remember her prize in tragedy, and will come

very near concluding that she was the real Fédor. It will have cost her so little. The trouble of inviting to your funeral some of your most illustrious lovers, and, because of the infrequency of trains, of keeping those famous old duffers to dine with the great reportorial lights. We two are the only ones she did n't invite to anything at all, the only ones she turned away, — just the very two that were nearest to your heart. Oh! the idea of not allowing us even to follow you to the cemetery; it 's a little disgusting, really, isn't it, Loulou? isn't it, my little Louloute?"

He leaned over his glass as if she might answer him from its depths, and called her pet names. And at last, emptying the glass at one gulp, he fell forward on the table, snoring and sobbing.

Ten times since he fell in with that depressing individual, Du Bréau had felt an impulse to fly, sickened by his revelations, but he was detained none the less by unhealthy curiosity, by the feeling that he must know if the wretched girl had really suffered because of him. Seeing that the man was asleep, he rose to go, but a glance outside compelled him to remain. The procession was coming from the church, escorted by bells and chants; and while it formed anew on the square, those of the Parisian guests who, being obliged to take the train, could not go to the cemetery, went to pay their parting respects to the family, or to obtain an invitation at the last moment, for Desvarennes was not mistaken, there was to be a funeral breakfast. The non-privileged ones started for the station,

pretending to be in great haste and with backs eloquent of ill humor. The winner of the prize in tragedy fluttered her mourning wings in the midst of a group of elderly celebrities. Maître Restouble sponged his brow in the scorching atmosphere as he talked with friend Veillon; and beneath the boxes of rose-laurels in front of the little café the reporters drank *grenadines*, exchanging in a loud voice their knowledge of the star about to be interred. Being all very young, those gentry had not the slightest notion of La Fédor's talent; but her adventures in the field of love, her vagaries of head and heart they had at their fingers' ends, and told them in detail as an obscene legend, of which the former lover, sitting by the open window, lost not a word, not a splash. He had a feeling of annoyance, of intense disgust, which, coming after Desvarennes' chatter, made Louise's martyrdom and the savagery of her sister seem the inventions of a sentimental sot, and led him to the conclusion:

"Why did I come here? I had no business here."

The entrance of little Mélie, still leading her brothers by the hand, roused him from his reverie. In the absence of the children the wasps had taken possession of the bread and cheese, especially the cheese. The plate was black with them and was fairly humming. The little ones descended on them, assisted by the tall sister, and an atrocious battle ensued. At last, when the swarm had taken flight, when the children were comfortably installed, each in front of a huge slice of soft bread, the girl

approached her father, who was still snoring, picked up his hat from the floor, and, having carefully wiped it, placed it on the table beside him in place of the bottle of absinthe, which had magically disappeared, been returned to the bar. The glances of the gentleman who was sitting close by, meeting hers again and again, embarrassed her somewhat during the performance of her maternal duties; but she very soon made up her mind to go on with them. As she passed him, returning to her brothers, Du Bréau seized her wrist, such a slender, fragile wrist, oh! so fragile as to bring the tears to one's eyes, and pressed a blue note into the moist little hand.

"For your children," he said in an undertone.

Instantly, over the bloated, sickly pallor of that face, the face of a child who had grown old too rapidly, a smile of adorable sweetness and understanding spread like a rainbow, extending from the sleeping father, the most troublesome of her children, to the plate of the two little gluttons; her red eyes, unshaded by lashes, were swimming in tears, and she bowed as she murmured:

"Thank you—thank you!"

III.

WHEN he went out, the church square was deserted. A single showman's van was waiting there, ready to start, the thin-flanked nag trying to reach the low branches of the shade-trees. The steeple was sending forth the last slow, dying notes of its knell, the last drops from the bottom of the holy-water basin, over the silent country. Dull rumbling peals of thunder answered at intervals. Doubtless it would have been wiser for Du Bréau to wait until after the storm, which he felt to be close at hand from the intense heat of the atmosphere, the motionless suspense of everything. But to remain a moment longer in that ghastly Wissous, to run the risk of hearing some fresh horror, seemed intolerable to him. He walked straight ahead therefore, and found himself almost immediately in the open country, where he was greatly surprised not to recognize the vast plain by which Veillon had brought him thither. Here there were sunken roads and little dales in the shadow of tall trees. He heard a creaking behind him as of tired axles and wheels; it was the last van of the fête leaving the village. He stopped it to ask the way to Juvisy.

"Why you're going away from Juvisy," said the

old showman, who was dozing under the awning of his heavy vehicle.

He was the same man who had given his confrère such excellent advice concerning the use of epaulets, as they stood at the bar.

A tall, red-haired girl, with a hoarse voice and harsh but regular features, clad in a skirt and jacket, her feet bare and dirty as if shod with hot cinders, was seated beside him and leaned over to see who was speaking to her father, or her man, perhaps both.

"If Monsieur chooses to ride with us," she said in a tone of authority, while curious faces appeared at the small windows of the van, "we will go around by Le Mesnil and put him on the right road. It will take less time than directing him, especially with the shower coming up."

A peal of thunder more violent than those that had gone before, which made the earth vibrate like the head of a drum, led Du Bréau to accept the offer of those poor creatures, who were very proud to give shelter to a Parisian, come thither, they supposed, to attend the actress's obsequies. He assumed an air of surprise:

"An actress?"

"Yes, and a famous one," said the old fellow proudly — he had been prompter at the Casino at Perpignan — "Louise Fédor of the Comédie-Française. She died here at a notary's."

They were passing a high gateway of painted wood, which stood wide open, guarded by two immense larches whose branches swept the ground.

"There 's the cemetery now," muttered the showman. "They 're just lowering her into the family tomb. Lean forward and you can see."

He pointed with his whip-handle to the end of the long avenue lined with green box and white stones, where a mass of mourning garments and uncovered heads stood bowing before the small chapel with stained windows and showy mosaics. He added, as his horse crept slowly up the little hill along the roughcast wall:

"It 's the finest tomb in the country; you won't find so handsome a one 'twixt here and Corbeil."

The tall girl interrupted him unceremoniously in her worn, rough voice:

"All the same, I would n't want to be buried there in her place. Who 'll come here to look for her, who 'll ever suspect that she 's here and toss her as they pass a good-day or a bouquet, the two sous' worth of flowers that she 'd always be sure to have at Paris, if there was nothing but a little stone with her name on it? And then, besides all that, that at Wissous" — two yellow brands flashed behind the gypsy's flaming eyebrows — "she 'll have her sister to keep her company some day, and she 's a damned vile woman."

"Really," said Du Bréau, in a tone which he strove to render indifferent, "do you think so badly of her as that?"

"I never saw her but once, but that was enough," the old man replied with compressed lips. "Understand, monsieur, that this year — "

The van continued its painful ascent along by

the wall of the cemetery, from which arose a dull, mechanical voice that rang false in the impressive silence of the countryside. The glowing panegyric which that voice was undoubtedly pronouncing, the phrases it was unreeling from some old official spindle, brilliant but shaky, Du Bréau was too far away to hear; but that funereal drone made him think of Desvarennes' declamation with the absinthe bottle in his hand, and the ingenuous confidences whispered in his ear intensified the oppression at his heart by proving how true all that the old drunkard had told him must be.

"This year for the provincial fête we gave *Ali Baba* and *Geneviève de Brabant*, for the benefit of Madame Diego here. On Sunday afternoon we both went, as the custom is, to offer the bigwigs our programmes and tickets for the evening. At the notary's we found the ladies on the terrace at the end of the garden, and at the very first word I saw that it was no use, there was nothing to hope for there. Just then we saw a little face no bigger than your fist, terribly hollow, terribly changed since Perpignan, rise from the invalid's easy-chair — she died three days after — and say: 'Oh! do, Maria! do, Maria!' Nothing but that, but from such a lovely mouth, in such a sweet, touching voice that the little one and I could n't hold back our tears. Ah! that Fédor must have drawn tears from her audiences with such a voice. But the notary's wife was n't touched by it. She turned as if a gadfly had stung her and flew out at her sister: 'I say, you — it is n't your money that goes.' At

the same time she motioned to us with her umbrella: 'That's the way out — off you go.'"

"And how well she would have liked to go with us, poor thing, to our free beggar's crib!" said the tall, red-haired girl with the dusty feet, clad in the livery of poverty.

They reached the top of the hill; the van turned into a narrow road through the fields, where there was hardly room for its wheels, and after some minutes of jolting it stopped at the junction of several roads, the broadest and straightest of which led to Juvisy.

"If you keep on at that gait, you 'll be there ahead of the storm," cried the old gypsy to Du Bréau, as he hurried along, almost running, in order to be alone and far away, to escape the story of the close of that life, as heart-rending and importunate as remorse.

Ah! yes, now he had the proof — it was for him that Louise had come to live at her sister's, for him that she suffered a thousand deaths, in the hope of seeing him once more; but was it possible that it was not all broken off and ended long ago, and forever? In vain did he search his conscience, it had no reproaches for him.

As he walked along, musing and looking straight before him, he was struck by the transformation of the landscape in a few hours. When he came thither with Veillon it was an immense Southern plain, dazzling and quivering in the glare of the boundless bright sky, vibrating with intense heat; now, beneath the same sky, but darker, as if it had

come nearer to the earth, the yellow diamond-shaped flowers of the colewort, the bright green of the fields of beets, the pink stripes of the sainfoin assumed extraordinary brilliancy. The whole scene seemed to be lighted from below, as in a landscape of the North, but of the North at midsummer, tempestuous, stifling, with nothing stirring, not a bird's wing, not a blade of oats. Suddenly, far, far away, at the extreme end of a field which invisible mowers were hastening to mow before the shower, the blade of a scythe gleamed in a ray of sunlight from behind, which found its way with difficulty between two dense clouds just over the cemetery, whose white wall stood out against the horizon.

Waving a last adieu to her who slept there, he resumed his journey, and lo! that straggling beam of the setting sun, even as it had touched the blade of a distant scythe, plunged into the recesses of his memory and evoked, by reason of a similarity in temperature as well as by the fatigue of his strange day, the memory of his first meeting with La Fédor, one summer afternoon nine or ten years before. It was at a rout, a *garden-party* at the English embassy. She had just recited the *Fête chez Thérèse*, with that captivating, slightly husky voice, that refined *abandon* of her whole being. — "Take me to the air, I am dying!" she said to Du Bréau, without looking at him; and passing through the crowd in those magnificent salons of the Hôtel Borghese where the voluptuous image of the lovely Pauline is reflected, many-hued, in

he, she was the more jealous on that account, and like the wood-pigeons that passed just now in all the fury of the storm, they loved each other a long while in lightning and tempest. Indeed that was the best feature of their liaison. Yes, those horrible scenes, those outbursts of anger that was almost madness, that went so far as blows, were far preferable to the degradation of the last years, the ghastly sinking into the mire of the life that strolling players lead, when the men called him "little François," the managers "Monsieur le Marquis," and when one and all looked upon him as already La Fédor's husband, a vulgar hawker of tickets and part owner of the theatre. And that was what he was drifting to, gently, without passion, without pleasure, by the blind and cowardly force of habit — the deadly rocking of the showman's van — when one day, in his mother's salon, he came face to face with her who was to teach him the intoxicating bliss of life *à deux*, his divine little Château-Fraye.

IV.

UPON leaving the Grande-Ceinture train to walk the two or three kilometres from the station to his home — for he was not expected by that train — Du Bréau found the roads dark, the daylight just fading in a cloudless sky, while at long intervals vivid flashes rending the peaceful horizon indicated the end of the storm. In his haste to reach home he had taken the *dead road*, full of muddy ruts and overgrown with weeds still dripping wet. Thence he took a short cut through deluged, gullied fields, which the storm had changed to great tracts of sea-weed, wet and slippery. Suddenly, on the edge of a cultivated field newly reaped and full of water, where his boots sank and stuck in the mud as in a horse-pond, the tall chimney of the refinery rose before him in the twilight, and a moment later François du Bréau, feeling about at the corner of the gate for the bell, pulled it joyfully.

Oh! the fragrance of the lemon trees after the shower, the newly-gravelled courtyard, glistening and neat, in front of the old Louis XV. abode with its long façade, where lights were running to and fro. After the darkness outside, the sudden home-like feeling was delicious. As he ascended the steps, a blind was opened softly on the first floor:

"Come up quickly. I am with the child."

"Is she sick?"

"No, it's nothing."

In the mother's *mezza voce* there was a velvety softness of tone, a happy inflection which reassured him at once.

Stopping in the vestibule to lay aside his drenched outer garments and his boots which were heavy with mud, he caught a glimpse in the brightly lighted dining-room of two covers laid and waiting on opposite sides of the glistening, flower-bedecked cloth. Now, upstairs quickly; a large room, another smaller one bathed in the vague bluish light of a night lamp. And through that floating starlike dust with which everything about is impregnated, he walks toward the little bed with its white muslin curtains by which his dear wife is standing, calling him with an affectionate gesture.

All the passionate warmth, the grateful fervor that he expressed in that first embrace, the sobs, the unexpressed avowals that he forced back, it would seem that she understood from the compassionate tone in which she consoled him beneath her breath. Such a wretched day he must have passed, poor dear! It is so sad to see some one we have known go away forever — it is as if one were parting with a little of oneself. It had not been a very cheerful afternoon for her either. The little one was fretful and her skin was burning hot, but toward evening the fever abated, the cheeks became cool again, and now she is sleeping, so quiet and so cool.

"Come, look."

The mother puts aside the curtain, and while they stand there, both leaning over that pearl-white, velvety flesh, tenderer than the most luscious fruit, while their breaths mingle with the light shiver from those tiny slightly-parted lips, the muslin gently falls behind them, envelops them all three in its fleecy folds. How pleasant it is, how far away all else! what perfect repose in forgetfulness of the world!

"It's all over. Metz has capitulated. Bazaine has lost all, sold all, even honor!"

Those who did not undergo the alarms of the great shipwreck of '70 can have no idea of what the name of Bazaine represented to us — the heroic Bazaine, as Gambetta called him — the hope with which he spurred our courage, the horrible darkness in which his desertion plunged us. Imagine every conceivable shout of deliverance and of joy: "Land! land! a sail! Saved! Let us embrace! Vive la France!" There was an echo of them all in that Versailles trooper's glorious name; and lo! in a twinkling it came to mean just the opposite. It was enough to give one the vertigo.

So it is that my arrival at the fort is a little vague in my mind. I have a confused remembrance of a captain of a frigate in wooden shoes, who escorted us through long barrack corridors; of a fine rain, a seashore rain, striping the great courtyard where sailors in blue caps and jackets were playing at tip-cat, shouting and frolicking like school-boys at play; and lastly of an interminable walk around the fortifications over a sticky, glistening road into which our shoes sank, by gabions and bastions, batteries of ship's guns, and high banks above which appeared the silhouette of a marine on guard, with his bugle at his belt, ready to call attention to the German bombs and shells. One thing which I remember distinctly is the roof of tarred canvas, dripping with rain, beneath which the officers of the guard were seated at

table before bowls of black coffee; I can see those beaming faces, those bright smiles looking up at us: "Well, Messieurs Landlubbers?" And de Vilers standing in the doorway, in his long, tightly buttoned coat, hurling at them the horrible news:

"Bazaine has surrendered!"

There was not a word, not an exclamation in answer to him; but the tent was illumined by a lightning flash, a flash made up of the combined glances of all those eyes, black, blue, accustomed to inland seas or to the open ocean, some as sharp as a knife-thrust, others as ardent as a Breton ballad, and one could read in the bright light of that flame the heroic resolution that you all formed, Desprez, Kiesel, Carvès, Saisset, who afterwards fell upon that bastion number 3, that bastion of honor where I saw you on the morning of October 31.

Ah! you should have seen that bastion number 3 in the early days of January, two months after our visit, with its embrasures demolished, the men's quarters battered, a broad breach in its wall, and the flood of lead and flame which enveloped it from morning till night. Like the shriek of peacocks on stormy days, the bugle of the sentinel blew without cessation. "We have no time to look out for ourselves!" said the men at the guns as they fell. And the other stations were little better sheltered. To cross the deserted court-yards, strewn with pieces of shell and shattered glass, in an atmosphere of gunpowder and charred wood, the sailors recklessly razed the walls of

their dilapidated barracks. Not a stone of the two buildings at the entrance was in place: the men on guard, like the whole garrison for that matter, were obliged to hide behind breastworks built of wrenched earth that had been ploughed up by shells for two months, friable, crumbling stuff, in which shells frequently exploded.

One evening as the commandant of the fort was sitting in the sheltered redoubt which served as his quarters, Captain de L—— appeared; he had just come aboard — as the phrase went — to replace the captain of a company of gunners, who had had his shoulder carried away by a bursting shell.

"Commandant," said the officer, his pallid, distorted lips working frantically as the words came forth, "I am a disgraced, ruined man. There is nothing left for me to do but blow out my brains."

"De L——, my dear fellow, what 's the matter?"

The commandant's hand put aside the little hanging lamp, which lighted up the walls of the little redoubt, but prevented his obtaining a full view of the sturdy soldier with the long, intensely agitated face, who stood before him.

"The matter is" — oh! the poor devil, how hard it was for him to say! — "the matter is that when I arrived at the bastion, the fire — the fire took me by surprise. I was afraid! What can you expect? I had never seen any fighting: only once, in Mexico, and that amounted to nothing. And, under that hail of lead, I acted like a coward two or three times, I saluted the shells, as they say, and the men saw me. I heard them laughing.

After that it was no use, do what I would. There is something between me and my men that keeps us apart — that always will keep us apart. There is a song going the rounds, sung to the air of the *Barbanchus* — but you know it, of course? Wherever I go I hear it, or I imagine that I hear it. Ah! good God! — night and day I have it ringing in my ears with the laughter of those devils. It 's enough to kill a man! "

He held his sailor's cap before his eyes and wept silently, like a child. Outside could be heard the roar of the bombs, a dull roar as of the sea on the breakers. At every report the redoubt cracked and swayed and filled with dust; and the little lamp, surrounded by a ruddy halo, swung to and fro as with the rolling of a ship.

" De L——, my friend, you are mad; I tell you that you 're mad! Sit down there."

The poor devil remonstrated, he was ashamed; but his superior forced him to a seat beside him on the little iron bed which was his only chair, placed his hand on his shoulder, and said to him in an affectionate, fatherly tone what it was necessary to say to soothe that soul in distress, to relax the tense nerves. Why, he had nobody but friends on board; and at Montrouge they were not friendly to cowards. Indeed, why talk about cowardice? What man could say that he had never saluted a shell? Especially in the beginning. As he was the last one to come there and had had no time to become acclimated, nothing was more natural than that nervous start, that momentary weakness which

nobody escaped.— "You understand me, de L——, nobody. Why, our sailors, who have become heroes now, who live in fire like salamanders and would play football with lighted shells, — if you had seen them two months ago when the real game began! They did n't stray far when they had to leave the casemates. Do you know that Admiral Pothan, the bravest man in the fleet, used to come twice a week and make the circuit of our ramparts and stand under fire for hours, to give our men a lesson in pluck? We all needed that lesson at that moment. That's the truth, my dear boy — so don't fret yourself about nothing at all. You are an excellent officer whom we all love and esteem. Hold up your head, and above all things remember this: no personal sorrow, however great, counts for anything now; here no man can die or should die except with his face to the enemy, fighting."

"I will remember. Thanks, commandant."

He wiped his eyes and went out.

Did he still hear the ghastly refrain ringing in his ears? It is probable. Eye-witnesses have stated that, during the last days of the siege, de L—— sought death with passionate earnestness, walking across the middle of the courtyards when the cannonading was fiercest, standing as straight and still as a flagstaff on the parapet of the bastion to direct the fire. But death is a flirt. One can be sure of nothing with him. You say to him: "Pray come," and he runs away, makes appointments with you for the pleasure of breaking them. It is impossible to understand.

De L—— was in that situation; he did not understand, and he was wondering whether he would have courage to live on to the end, when, just as midnight was striking on the 26th of January, the whole girdle of forts around the city as well as the outlying ones, those ponderous galiots of stone moored fore and aft at our gates, whose batteries had been firing incessantly for three months — all the forts and redoubts, after one last terrible volley which enveloped the city in a scarf of red and white flame, suddenly became silent: Paris was vanquished.

Three days later, on the morning of the evacuation, through a warm and golden haze in which one divined the approach of a beautiful spring, eager to make us forget the cold, ill-omened winter of the siege, the *crew* of Montrouge, knapsacks packed and muskets stacked, was assembled by companies in the enclosure awaiting the signal for departure. After the night on the casemates the red sunshine seemed very pleasant, as did the cool breeze and all that open space where they could walk about without receiving pieces of boiler iron on their heads. Sparrows, coming forth from their nests, pricked the mist with their little cries. And yet something weighed upon the hearts of our brave tars and caused a choking sensation in their throats, although their broad blue collars were very loose and comfortable; and in that profound silence, so unusual to one and all, they talked in low tones, as if embarrassed by it. — "Suppose we have a game of tip-cat while we're waiting?" suggested a fusi-

lier from the fleet, a mere boy. They looked at him as if he had fallen from the moon. No, indeed, they had not the heart for that.

At the same instant Captain de L——, who was looking for his gunners, called them about him with a gesture. His tall figure was in full dress, with his cross and a pair of new white gloves which he crushed in his strong hand:

"Sailors, I am going to say good-bye to you." His voice trembled slightly, but soon became firm. — "I took an oath that not a Prussian should set foot here while I am alive. The time has come for me to keep my word. When the last man of you passes through the postern your captain will have ceased to live. He had lost your esteem; I trust that you will restore it to him, being assured now that he was no coward. — A pleasant journey, my children!"

And it happened as he said. The squadron had no sooner started, led by the buglers, than two reports from the officers' quarters rang out in the solitude and silence of the fort. They found de L—— breathing his last upon his bed, with two bullets in his brain and his revolver still smoking on his pillow.

A legend *à la* Beaurepaire has been founded upon his death. But this that I have told, apart from a few details of stage-setting, is the true story; and although less heroic perhaps, it seems to me to be more beautiful and more human, more suited to our times than the other.

AT LA SALPÊTRIÈRE.

SCENE: Charcot's office at La Salpêtrière, one consultation morning some ten or twelve years ago. On the walls, photographs of simple Italian and Spanish paintings, representing saints at prayer, seers of visions, persons possessed with devils, *convulsionnaires*, the great religious nerve-maladies as they were called in the house. The professor seated at a small table; long, smooth hair, a powerful brow, close-shaved, haughty lips and a piercing glance flashing over his pale, puffy cheeks. The intern in white apron and velvet cap, with bright eyes almost invaded by an enormous beard, goes in and out; seated around the room, a few guests, mostly doctors — Russians, Germans, Italians, and Swedes. The procession of patients begins.

A woman from the canton of Var brings to the consultation her little daughter, a short, fat, hideous creature, all spotted with red scars. In the green and yellow costume of a Southern Sunday, her figure swells and overflows. The child is *enceinte*. Some one wonders how such a shapeless mass, which seems to have fallen into the fire and been spoiled in the cooking, could have become a mother. "During an epileptic fit," says Charcot, while the

woman of Var, a weak whining creature, tells us about her girl's *en*disposition, how it takes her and how it progresses. The professor turns to the intern:

"Is there a fire in the next room? Undress her; see if she has spots on her side." I was touched by the Southern accent, the hideousness of the spectacle; but I was touched still more deeply by the next patient. A child of fifteen, very neatly dressed in a little cap and crimson jacket, a round, ingenuous face, the image of her father, a small manufacturer from Rue Oberkampf, who comes in with her.

Sitting timidly in the middle of the room, with their eyes on the floor, they encourage each other with stealthy glances. The professor questions the patient. What a heartrending thing! She must tell everything out loud, before so many gentlemen —where her trouble hurts her, how it comes on, and how it happened. "At her grandmother's death, Monsieur le Docteur," says her father.

"Did she see her dead?"

"No, Monsieur, she did n't see her."

Charcot's voice becomes softer as he addresses the child: "Did you love your grandmother very dearly?" She motions "yes," with a nod of her little cap, without speaking, the veins in her neck swollen with sobs. The German doctor approaches her. He is studying the diseases of the drum of the ear peculiar to victims of hysteria, he wears gold spectacles, and as he moves a tuning-fork over the girl's forehead, in an authoritative voice he bids

her: "Re*beat* after me — Sonntag."— Silence. The specialist is triumphant; she did not hear him. It seems to me more probable that she did not understand him. Long disquisition from the German doctor; the Italian takes a hand in it, the Russian has a word to say. The two victims sit in their chairs waiting, forgotten and embarrassed, when the intern, to whom I have expressed my doubts, says in an undertone to the little Parisian: "Repeat after me — Sunday." She opens her eyes wide and says without effort: "Sunday," while the discussion continues as to the ear troubles of hysterical subjects.

Suddenly Professor Charcot turns to the father:

"Are you willing to leave your child here? She will be well cared for."

Oh! the terrified "No!" with which she looked at her father, and the loving smile with which he reassured her: "Don't be afraid, my darling." It seems that they have a premonition of what her life would be in that house, that she would be used for observation and experiment, like the dogs that are so well cared for at Sanfourche's, like this Daret and all the others who are to be worked upon in our presence after the patients have all passed in procession and the consultation is at an end.

Daret is a tall young woman of some thirty years, small head, wavy hair, pale and hollow-cheeked, with marks of pregnancy and a chronic sniffing as if she had just been weeping. She is at home at La Salpêtrière, in a chemisette, with a handkerchief at her neck. "Go to sleep," the professor

commands. The intern, standing behind the long, slim creature, rests his hands an instant on her eyes. A long breath and it is done. She is asleep, standing erect and rigid. The poor body retains any position in which it is put; the arm when extended remains extended, a light touch upon each muscle causes all the fingers to open one after another, and the hand remains open and motionless. She is the mannikin of the studio, even more docile and flexible. "And it's impossible for her to deceive us," Charcot declares; "to do that she must know as much anatomy as we."

The automaton stands, a repellent object, within the circle of our chairs, obedient to every command, which brings to her face an expression corresponding to the motion she is required to make. When her fingers are in a bunch at her lips, simulating a kiss, her face instantly lights up, her lips smile; they clench her fist in a threatening attitude and her brow contracts, her nostrils expand and quiver with wrath. "We can even do this," and the professor raises one of her fists as if to strike, at the same time making the right hand go through a caressing motion. Thereupon the whole face assumes a grimace of twofold meaning, fierce and tender at once, like a child's mask which laughs and cries. And again the German manipulates his tuning-fork, his auricular speculum, probing her ear with a long needle.

"We must not tire her," says the Master, "go and fetch Balmann."

But the intern returns alone, sorely vexed.

Balmann refuses to come, being in a rage because Daret was summoned first. Between those two cataleptics, first subjects at La Salpêtrière, there exists a jealousy worthy of operatic stars or scouts, and sometimes noisy disputes, torrents of Billingsgate flavored with technical terms, rouse the whole ward to frenzy.

In default of Balmann they produce Fifine, a pink-cheeked shop-girl, in a long cloak, with a little turned-up nose, a sulky mouth and dressmakers' fingers, tattooed with the needle. She comes in scowling; she is of the Balmann faction and refuses to work. In vain does the intern try to put her to sleep; she weeps and resists. "Don't annoy her," says Charcot, and he returns to Daret, who has rested, and sniffs with pride at resuming her exhibition. What a mysterious thing is this cataleptic sleep, encompassing the subject with a light, illusion-laden atmosphere, as of a dream that one has lived! They point to an imaginary bird on the curtains at the window. Her closed eyes see its shape and its winged motion; she smiles vaguely and mutters: "Oh! how pretty it is!" And, fancying that she is holding it, she pats and smooths her hand, which simulates the shape of a bird. But the intern exclaims in an appalling voice: "Daret, look on the floor in front of you, — a rat, a serpent!" Through her heavy closed eyelids she sees what he points out to her. Thereupon begins a scene of mimic horror and alarm than which neither Rachel nor Ristori nor Sarah ever conceived anything more sublime; the old, classic,

stereotyped human fear, always and everywhere the same, fettering the arms, the legs, the whole being in a paroxysm of fright, turning to stone that thin face where nothing seems to live save the mouth, which emits a long, shuddering sigh of terror.

Ah! in pity's name, wake her. They content themselves with changing her vision by pointing to flowers on the floor and asking her to make us a nosegay. She kneels, and still surrounded by that crystalline atmosphere which a command from the intern or the professor would instantly shatter, she carefully ties around her fingers an imaginary thread and breaks it with her teeth. While we are watching that unconscious pantomime, there is a rattling noise, a hoarse, barking cough in the vestibule. "Fifine has a fit!" We hurry to the spot.

The poor child has fallen, and is writhing on the cold tiles, foaming at the mouth, wringing her hands, her body bent like a bow, tense and distorted, almost in the air. "Quick, attendants! take her up and put her to bed." Four stout girls appear, very robust and very neat in their great white aprons, and one says with an artless country accent! "I know how to compress, Monsieur le Docteur." And they press and compress, as they carry that bundle of frantic nerves across the court-yard, howling and struggling with her head thrown back; a woman possessed with a devil is subjected to exorcism, as in the old religious picture which I examine when we have returned to Charcot's office.

And what of Daret whom we have forgotten? The tall creature, still asleep, is still picking imaginary flowers on the carpet, arranging and tying her little nosegays.

Breakfast with the interns in the overheated nurses' room. As we eat our *chaloupier* stew, the principal dish, and drink hospital wine poured by an old epileptic maid-servant, we talk magnetism, suggestion, insanity, and I venture to tell those extremely materialistic young people a strange episode in my life, the story of three green hats which I bought in Munich during the war of 1866. When I returned to Paris I gave those hats — they were of stiff felt, of the color of old moss in the woods, and had a little bird speared on the buckle with wings spread and enamel eyes — to three of my friends, dear, good fellows to whom I was much attached, Charles Bataille, Jean Duboys, André Gill. All three of them died insane, and at different times I saw and heard them indulge their respective manias in my Tyrolean hats with the little birds.

My story is listened to politely, but as a novelist's invention, amid the smiles of the whole table. After the coffee, when our pipes are smoked out, the head man of Charcot's clinic suggests a walk through the quarters of the insane. In the great courtyard, on this beautiful winter's day, clear and cold, the sun shines upon poor demented creatures in waterproofs, crouching on doorsteps, solitary and silent, with nothing to connect them with life; each absorbed by his fixed idea, an invisible prison

with whose battered walls the diseased brain collides every instant. Apart from that no exterior indication of illness, a placid expression, rational movements. Through the open window of a room on the ground floor I see a lovely girl, bare-armed and with her skirt turned up to make an apron, vigorously scrubbing the floor; she is mad.

The next courtyard that we pass through, where there are several trees, is more disorderly. On the asphalt in front of the cells are seated two girls in blue smock-frocks with their hair falling down their backs, pretty girls and quite young. One laughs uproariously, throws herself back, kisses on both cheeks the gloomy, listless idiot who crouches in a heap by her side. Another larger girl, very much excited, strides furiously back and forth, comes to us, questions the intern: "What am I here for, Monsieur? You may know perhaps, but I do not;" then turns her back on us and continues her frenzied course. Soon an inquisitive, chattering crowd surrounds us and jostles us. A young woman in a short school-girl's dress and linen of snowy whiteness, tells us with abundant gestures an incomprehensible story; she has an air of well-being, of prosperity which arouses one's envy. Louis the Sixteenth's sister — we have her own word for it — an old woman with a hooked nose and chin, makes jocose remarks to the intern, while at an open door on the ground floor, a creature with a long, ashen, wrinkled face calls to us with an amiable smile: "Messieurs, I am a painter; would you like to see some of my work? But wait

until I put on my Tyrolean hat, I never paint except in a Tyrolean hat." The poor creature disappears for an instant and returns with a little green hat with a bird's feather, an exact copy of one of my Munich hats. The interns, like myself, are thunderstruck by the strange coincidence, and the madwoman, showing us two or three hideous daubs, seems immensely proud of our astonishment, which she takes for admiration. As we walk away I notice a number of those little mountaineer's hats drawn in chalk on the wall by the madwoman.

The entrance gate is wide open; the depressing, crazy cattle who follow us screech and jabber and seem to grow excited over our departure. I turn and look back when I am outside. In the gateway of the courtyard, which is neither closed nor guarded save by a broad sunbeam, a bar of light which hypnotizes them, the madwomen are drawn up in line, screaming and gesticulating. One of them, the aged sister of Louis XVI., with one arm raised, the other akimbo like a vivandière, shouts in a bass voice: "Vive l'Empereur!"

Courtyards, more courtyards, young trees, benches, waterproofs fluttering about in the icy air, striding excitedly to and fro alone, lugubrious visions of human derangement, among which I take note of two figures.

In the great work-room, a very light and cheerful room, which Doctor Voisin calls his Senate, where madwomen sit in a row in easy chairs, knitting and sewing, a former prostitute stands by herself at the window. Faded and withered now, she never

speaks, simply a "pst! pst!" to attract attention, accompanied by the professional smile. That is all that is alive in her, the memory of the degrading word and gesture. Oh! that pale face behind the high, light window; that madwoman, that dead woman "making the window!"[1]

Another, less painful:

"You see, I am waiting, I am going away," says a good woman standing against the wall by the door, a satchel in one hand, in the other a napkin pinned about a little package. A pleasant, motherly, provincial face; she smiles at every one in the circle and bids them adieu; and that all day long and every day for ten years, and for how many years still to come!

[1] "*Faire la fenêtre* is said of a prostitute who lies in wait at a window, and who, by sundry alluring signs, seeks to entice passers-by into entering the house."—BARRÈRE.

MEMORIES OF A CHIEF CLERK.

THE winter of 1854. I was twenty-three years old. I had just married. My wife's small income and a clerkship in the Department of Marine, due to the record of my father, Jean-Marie Sainte-Albe, naval captain on the retired list, enabled us to make both ends meet, in a fifth floor apartment on Avenue des Ternes. Nina went out little, for lack of dresses; I, being much in demand because of my pleasant voice, a Mocker with a somewhat wider range, and my experience in private theatricals, frequented a few salons on Rues de Varenne, Monsieur, and Barbet-de-Jouy. Official society too was open to me, but I had not as yet had the honor of appearing in white cashmere breeches at the receptions at the Tuileries, and I shunned the great crushes at the Palais-Bourbon and the Foreign Office, to which the gold lace and finery of the great functionaries, all of whom had their special costumes in those days, gave the appearance of the fêtes of Valentino, bedizened and burlesqued.

Once, however, M. Ducos, Minister of the Marine and my first chief, having conceived the whimsical idea of giving a performance of opéra-comique at the department, I consented to sing

the two lovers' parts in the *Déserteur* and *Rose et Colas*. Delsarte, the great artist, was kind enough to give me some advice to which I frankly attribute the greater part of my success. That name Delsarte means nothing to you, young men; but all those who, like myself, have heard that incomparable master's lessons in his humble home on Rue des Batailles, may fairly boast of understanding singing and declamation. Ah! the handsome old fellow! Buttoned tight in an interminable frock coat which exaggerated his great height, his slight beard patriarchally white, he would stride furiously up and down his little sub-lieutenant's chamber, increasing its size by a gesture *à la* Frédérick; and, looking out upon that shivering prospect of dirty roofs, of sickly gardens sloping to the Seine, beneath a low-lying sky obscured by the smoke from factory chimneys, he would evoke *Orphée's* "Spectres et Larves," or the flower-bedecked, fantastic shepherds of Monsigny and Sedaine, simply with a breath from a toothless mouth abnormally wide open, simply with the remnants of a voice whose chords were worn out, but whose accentuation was irresistible.

On the day following my triumph as actor and singer in the salons of the ministry — I say triumph, and you will see why — I arrived late at my desk, the supper and the cotillion having kept me out of bed till daylight. My office-boy, who was watching for me at the end of the passage, rushed forward as soon as he spied me:

"Make haste, Monsieur Saint-Albe, you 're

wanted in the minister's private office. His Excellency has sent twice to ask for you."

"To ask for me! — The minister?"

Everything began to turn around, the gray walls, the windows, the polished leather on the folding doors.

Our young men of to-day can form no idea of the exalted position of a minister in those days on the long hierarchical ladder extending from the emperor to the sutler. A petty clerk, even after the *Rose et Colas* of the night before, summoned to M. Ducos' private office, TO HIS PRIVATE OFFICE! You should have seen the stupefaction of my fellow clerks.

The minister was standing when I entered. Dressed in pepper and salt, his large features framed by whiskers *à la* d'Orléans, he came to meet me with an effusive, familiar manner, and, taking me by the shoulder, led me toward a very bald individual of lordly aspect who was warming his back at the fire.

"Here is our bluebird, my dear Count," said the minister deferentially, but without embarrassment.

The count gazed at me a moment searchingly, then questioned me concerning my age and my family. — "Married? — no child as yet? — Ah! so much the better." — Whether from carelessness or fatigue, half of his words remained in his moustache. I did not always understand him perfectly, for, in addition to all the rest, I suffered from the embarrassment that one feels in the presence of a

at the very entrance of the village, at the rear of a small courtyard filled with flowers and brilliant with an enormous bed of geraniums. Despite the mourning within the house and the frame of black cloth around the door, the office, which was well provided with clients, was not idle that day, and through the blinds, only half-closed, one could see profiles bending over documents, and hear a youthful voice dictating, amid the scratching of goose-quills busily engrossing.

In the lower hall, with its cool, resonant tiled floor, a trestle awaited the coffin; at the end of the hall was a glass door through which could be seen the green paths in the garden and the black figures of the guests.

"Stay here," said Veillon, leaving his friend in the courtyard, "the coffin has not come down yet. I am going to ask permission to see her. I think there is still time."

Deeply moved by the thought of that last interview, Du Bréau was beginning to lose patience as he walked in and out, among the geraniums, listening to the whispering of the clerks in the office behind him.

"Are we to go up?" he asked his friend, who appeared at last under the funeral drapery.

Veillon stammered.

"It 's of no use — we cannot — it 's too late."

The other, not observing his embarrassment, naturally suggested that they go into the garden with the other guests; perhaps he was not sorry,

person who assumes that he is perfectly well known to you but whose identity escapes you altogether. With vague eye and wits on the defensive one listens, on the watch for a word, for some trifle to put you on the track. That air of reserve, of constraint made an excellent impression; I discovered that afterward, and I had a proof of it at once, when the unknown "dear count" offered to take me as his chief clerk, eight thousand francs, house and fuel — a dream!

"Does that tempt you?"

Did it tempt me!

"Very good, to-morrow morning at seven o'clock. — Quai d'Orsay."

He smiled very loftily, nodded with an insolent grace which I never saw in any other man, and took his leave, escorted as far as the small anteroom by the minister, who came back to me with outstretched hands in a fine outburst of Bordelais effusiveness:

"I congratulate you, my dear child."

I thanked him for his sympathy; then, at the risk of appearing idiotic, I asked:

"But who is he?"

I could not abide in my uncertainty. There are so many counts in Paris, and Quai d'Orsay is so extensive!

M. Ducos gazed at me, stupefied by my artless expression.

"What! you don't know him? Why, it's Mora — President of the Corps Législatif."

In very truth, what other than that great sceptic

of a Mora, that exquisite sybarite who throughout his life affected to weigh in the same scales politics, public affairs, music, and love — what other than he could have chosen for his chief secretary as Vice-Emperor a parlor tenor, an opéra-comique lover? It is true that beneath the outer shell of the distinguished amateur in trifles, there lay concealed a shrewd analyst of human character, a very expert jockey who understood and managed men even better than he did his stables. I was not long in finding it out.

A week after my meeting with Mora, Ninette and I established ourselves in one of the appurtenances of the Palais-Bourbon called Hôtel Feuchères, a delightful little house between courtyard and garden, where the old Prince de Condé kept his last mistress.

The first evening, when the furniture of our young household was scattered through the two enormous rooms, salon and bedroom, we lighted all the candles the better to enjoy the long mirrors, the high gilded ceilings. We were free; Mora was hunting at Chamarande with the Emperor, and I was not afraid of one of those horrible peals of the bell which were about to become the torment of my life, coming at every hour, morning, evening, night, tearing me away with a sudden shock from the table, from my bed, chaining my will to that bell-cord whose painful struggle could be heard in the thick ivy on the walls, before the ting-a-ling!

How far away we were from the little lodgings

on Avenue des Ternes, in that mansion with the majestic door-windows draped with antique silk curtains five metres in length, looking on the terrace and the pheasant house! "You know, Nina, it was behind that trellis yonder at the end of the garden that they found the prince hanged. But no, no — that frightens you — it is n't true, for old Condé died in the provinces, at Saint-Leu, I assure you." And to reassure my wife completely, I actually danced before her — oh! intoxication of youth and of the beginning of fortune! — on Madame de Feuchères' floor, a fantastic *cavalier seul*, which we baptized on the spot "the grandeur hornpipe."

Having extinguished the candles in the salon, we went into the bedroom, and there, while Nina was going to bed, I, like a locomotive which on its arrival at the station discharges what it still contains of roaring, smoking steam, set about writing to my father-in-law, a worthy vine-dresser in Bourgogne, an infantile, delirious letter, informing him of our new position; and to make that simple but rapacious soul understand what good luck it was to sail under the flag of Mora, the famous brewer of affairs of State, I let myself loose in idiotic sentences.

"The Grand-Central is ours now, papa, and the *tourteaux* of Naples and the refineries of Lübeck! Ours the turns on the Bourse, the deals with companies and the fat perquisites from confiscations! In the words of Père Guizot, a friend of the family: 'Let us get rich!' — When we are

old and our horses too fat, the Academy is at hand for virtuous donations and the *Officiel* for anonymous restitutions."

When I had placed a seal upon three pages of such extravagant stuff, why did it occur to me to carry the letter myself to the mail-box at the Corps Législatif? Had the servants gone to bed? Did I distrust them? These memories are of such a far-off date that I cannot say with any certainty. The one thing which is very clear in my mind and which I affirm absolutely is that, after taking that perhaps ill-considered precaution, I went to sleep drunk with joy, and that the next morning, when I entered my office on the entresol of the presidential residence, I found that infernal letter lying open on my desk, slashed with a blue pencil.

Once when I was very young, I was drowned, so nearly drowned that I had the death-rattle in my throat and was unconscious. I have known the moment when one is dying, the last glance which includes everything, which scoops up life as with the cast of a net, the whole of life, great things and trivial, the quiver of the shrub in the sunlight on the opposite shore, which rises, rises as the eyes sink deeper; and a thousand incidents of the past, lost in the distance, faces, localities, sounds, perfumes, which assail you all at once. That moment of supreme anguish I lived through again as I gazed at my open letter. How came it there? What had HE thought when he read it, when he found repeated distinctly in my handwriting the

calumnies that were whispered abroad, that vile legend, false as all legends are, with which Paris embellished his royal escutcheon with the bar sinister? The words started from the page, danced about before my eyes:

"The Grand Central is ours."

And in the silence of the winter morning, lined with soft white mist, in the warm, luxuriously furnished room, listening to the snapping of a generous wood fire behind the fender and the dull rumbling of the carriages along the quay, I saw in my mind's eye Madame de Feuchères' bedroom, my poor Ninette still in bed, enjoying to the full her new splendor, the delights of that first day to be followed by many similar days, and my entrance like a clap of thunder: — "Get up. We are going away. It is all over."— For it was all over without the slightest doubt. What answer could I make to a man who had been so kind? What excuse could I invent in face of the undeniable truth? To resign without any noise, without any words, was the only manly and dignified course. But, my God! what a wrench!

Steps at the door—it is softly opened. I turn. It is Mora, already gloved, with his hat on his head, dressed as always in the height of fashion, but very pale, the transparent pallor of mornings in Paris. Paying no heed to my agitation, although it was clearly visible in my hesitating salutation, he handed me a paper:

"Is there anybody here? I must have two copies of this, very distinctly written, for the Emperor and

Empress." He added, approaching my desk: "See if you can read my writing."

It was the draft of his speech at the impending opening of the Chambers, written in his fine, nervous running hand, half of the words unfinished, as when he talked. I read it perfectly.

"Make the copies quickly, then, and bring them to me at the Tuileries, where I am going now."

At the same moment our glances met magnetically upon my letter.

"Tear up that vile stuff," he said in an undertone, without looking at me.

"O Monsieur le Comte—"

"Not another word. There is that between us henceforth. Try to make me forget it."

And he went away.

Ah! what a masterful man! How tightly he held me with that letter! What a curb! We never mentioned it; but how many times I have seen it in the ironical expression of his bright eye as it met mine!

"The Grand Central is ours, papa."

See now what men are. A few months later, as I was making up my accounts one evening, at the presidency, I discovered that there were two louis short. I watched my office-boy; he was the culprit. A poor devil, married, with a pack of children; I took pity on him. But, remembering Mora's lesson, I put it in force in my turn. Repeating the scene of the letter, word for word, with the same stinging voice and sidelong glance, I said: "There are two louis between us, Grandperron; try and make me

forget them." He thanked me with tears in his eyes, — and a week later rifled the safe. In that way I learned that lessons are never of any use.

I learned many other things as well, in Mora's service.

THE LESSON IN HISTORY.

(1872.)

AFTER breakfast, which was plentiful and delicious as usual, the Marshal, feeling a trifle heavy, lighted a good cigar and began to pace up and down the little gravelled paths in his garden, on the arm of the aide-de-camp on duty. It was early in October, one or two days before the court-martial; it was a soft, gray day, and in the tranquil atmosphere naught could be heard save an occasional roll of drums toward Satory, and trains passing through the woods, with a hissing of steam and rustling of foliage.

The Marshal walked without speaking, with a preoccupied air. Suddenly he stopped and said, turning to the aide-de-camp: "I wish you would tell me something about a certain Admiral Byng to whom the newspapers have referred àpropos of my matter. I fancy that he must be some burlesque hero of the Variétés or Palais-Royal, like the Swiss admiral or General Boum — is n't he, Colonel?"

The aide-de-camp, who happened to be a man of some reading, was perfectly well posted as to the subject upon which he was questioned, but he was somewhat at a loss what reply to make. How-

ever, he considered that it was his duty to set his chief right, so he explained to him that Admiral Byng was an English naval commander of the 18th century, whom a French squadron, commanded by M. de la Gallissonnière, had had the honor of whipping and putting to flight in front of Port-Mahon, to which Richelieu was laying siege at the time.

THE MARSHAL.

Ah! yes, Richelieu — the great cardinal. To be sure — I have heard of him.

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP, *timidly.*

I beg your pardon, Marshal. It was n't that Richelieu! It was another man.

THE MARSHAL, *much surprised.*

Ah! really, was there another? I should never have thought — But go on, Colonel.

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP, *embarrassed.*

Really, Marshal, it is such a sad story; I don't know if I ought —

THE MARSHAL.

Nonsense! go on!

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP *bows and continues.*

Your Excellency must know that the English have had from time immemorial an exceedingly sensitive national self-esteem. So that that battle of Port-Mahon was a terrible blow to them; not

so much in the way of actual loss — Byng had turned tail before the end of the battle — but in the way of moral prestige, diminished influence. To explain his conduct the admiral claimed that he had a contrary wind, and that, as he seemed to be fighting under a disadvantage, he preferred to avoid a battle and save a fleet for England.

THE MARSHAL.

Why, that 's just like me. Pray go on, Colonel.

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Byng stood well at court, and as he had a fine record, King George contented himself with depriving him of his command. But there was a fierce outcry in England. The name of Byng, formerly so honored and applauded, became an object of contempt and hatred. The people made it a byword, and the national feeling is so strong in that devil of a country that King George's hand was forced. A year after his catastrophe Admiral Byng was summoned to appear before a court-martial.

THE MARSHAL.

Just my case again.

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP.

The trial was very long and complicated. Politics were involved in it, the foreign courts all took a hand. Byng wrote memorials on memorials. He invoked the testimony of his officers; he even had recourse to his conquerors, to La Gallissonnière and

to Richelieu, whose letter, entirely complimentary to the admiral, figured in the trial.

THE MARSHAL.

Why the case is exactly like mine. Ah! I trust that they acquitted him?

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP.

No, Marshal. They were determined to make an example. Byng was convicted by a unanimous vote.

THE MARSHAL.

What was his sentence? Was he cashiered?

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP, *embarrassed.*

No, Marshal.

THE MARSHAL.

Exiled?

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP, *with increasing embarrassment.*

No, Marshal.

THE MARSHAL.

What then, in God's name?

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Admiral Byng was shot in Portsmouth Roads, on board his flagship.

THE MARSHAL, *after a silence.*

That is terrible! They must have had proofs of his treason?

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Not the slightest. The naval court-martial, on the other hand, did full justice to his personal valor and to the purity of his intentions. The decree which sentenced him to death gave only this reason: *for having failed in battle to do all that he might have done.*

"Ah!" said the Marshal, who had become very thoughtful; and he continued to pace his little garden at the same regular, unconscious gait which acts as a balance-wheel for thoughts that are too heavy. From time to time he stopped and repeated in an undertone: *for having failed in battle to do all that he might have done.*[1]

[1] In October, 1873, Bazaine was court-martialled, charged:

First — With having capitulated and surrendered the fortress of Metz, of which he had the superior command, without having exhausted all the means of defence.

Second — With having, as the head of the army before Metz, signed a capitulation in the field, the result of which was to cause his troops to lay down their arms; and with having failed to do everything which he was bound by duty and honor to do, before treating verbally and in writing.

LES SANGUINAIRES.

DURING the winter of —— (do not ask me to be more precise, it was too long ago) the doctors had sent me to try the sunshine and orange cure on the shores of the blue sea in the gardens of Ajaccio.[1]

Is it true that politics is the exclusive preoccupation and passion of Corsica to-day? I cannot say; but at the time of which I write, in the heyday of the Second Empire, from one end of the island to the other, from Place du Diamant to the summit of Monte Rotondo, gambling, the rage for gambling, held sway everywhere. I saw shepherds in the thickets, while watching their flocks, playing at *la scopa* and staking a pipe against a knife, a sheep against a cheese. Village priests invited me to enter their vicarages, to take a hand at some game. At Ajaccio the little cigar-girls on Rue de la Préfecture, as brown and as well-made as their *trabucos*, stole part of their short breakfast hour to play cards. I myself had hardly arrived when I caught the national disease, and I took my sunshine cure at the Club, playing bouillotte with venerable old fellows or baccarat with effervescent youth.

[1] Daudet went to Corsica in the autumn of 1862.

One evening of bad luck and depression I had left the card table, and, with my forehead against the window-pane moist with the spray from the neighboring sea and the evening dampness, I was musing remorsefully on the time I had wasted, on the backwardness of my work, and on the future, which seemed to me as obscure and uncertain as all those moving shadows, that abyss of sky and water through which gleamed the intermittent rays from a great lighthouse far out at sea. Suddenly a hand was laid on my shoulder and I heard the jesting voice of Papa Vogin, one of the old members of the Club, who had known Mérimée: —

"Well, Monsieur le Continental, what are you looking at so attentively?"

"I am looking at the light from the lighthouse, Monsieur Vogin; it makes me envious."

Through the good man's fragile spectacles filtered a mischievous smile of comprehension.

"To be sure you would be better situated to work there than at Ajaccio."

And suddenly he added: —

"The lighthouse on the Sanguinaires is on my route as engineer. There is a room there which I occupy when I make my visit of inspection. It is at your service if your heart tells you to go there. As it happens the Roads and Bridges boat is going there to-morrow to carry the regular supply of provisions and the relief keeper. Go on her. I will give you a letter for the head keeper. In ten days the boat will return to the islands again, she makes the trip three times a month. If after ten

days of it you have had enough of solitude, you can come back; in the contrary event you can stay at the light as long as it is agreeable to you."

The next morning, at daybreak, the boat took me aboard with my luggage. When we started the weather was beautiful, but toward noon, after I had landed, the wind began to blow from the north and blew the same tune for a month. It was impossible to land at the light, and I was tied up there. Several times the Roads and Bridges boat appeared in the offing, showing her white hull over the waves. We exchanged desperate gestures, words that were scattered by the wind. The whole month of December and the first week in January passed in that way. The seclusion eventually became burdensome to me. A mere speck in the infinite expanse of sky and sea, I worked little more than at Ajaccio. I barely had the courage to jot down my daily impressions in one of the little note-books which accompanied me everywhere, even in those days; hasty notes taken for my own benefit alone and without the slightest thought of their having any literary interest. I have before me a note-book of that period, and as I turned over the leaves it occurred to me to extract a few lines from it. I shall endeavour to allow my notes to retain their accent of genuineness, although upon those worn, dog's-eared little pages, where the ink is old and faded, the words are lost as it were in a dream-like distance, vanished so completely that my pen has often been obliged to pass over them in order to recall them to life.

MONDAY, 24th December,
Christmas Eve.

Seven o'clock. The daylight is fading. Of the three men on duty, Dinelli, the head keeper, has just gone up into the light for the first watch, from seven till eleven. Bertolo, who is to take the watch from eleven till three, has gone to put his long, taciturn body to bed, as well as the enormous red clay pipe, whose stem his thin, nervous lips keep mumbling, even when he is asleep; and, lastly, Père Trophime, the one we call the Provençal, is just finishing clearing the table at which we four dined dismally enough, with the door closed and barred because of the wind, which clings obstinately in the same quarter of the sky in these closing days of December. The old keeper's sea-boots clatter on the slates; I can hear his comrade snoring in the adjoining room, the chain of the light running off the reel, the dripping of the oil in the great zinc reservoir. Under those high, light, stuccoed arches into which the darkness is beginning to steal, the slightest sounds are magnified, echoes of solitude and *ennui* which fall heavily on my heart.

To escape those depressing conditions I go out on the terrace for a moment. It is a platform two or three metres square, surrounded by a parapet of white masonry. You would say it was the platform for discharging grain at one of our old mills in Provence. A little daylight still lingers there, a few rays left by the setting sun and forgotten on the elevation on which the lighthouse is built. The rest of the island at my feet is lost to sight in

patches of violet mist. It is impossible to distinguish anything, either the ruined Genoese tower at the extreme end of the cliff, or the little cabins, with their disjointed, slamming doors, of the old, abandoned lazaretto in the pale green grass along the shore, or even the heavy skeins of white foam, which, since the day of my arrival, have been in a hopeless tangle all around the island, and made it inaccessible.

Three weeks! I have been here only three weeks! And it seems to me more than a year. Yes, it seems more than a year since the group of reddish islands called the "Sanguinaires," scattered at the entrance of the bay, appeared before me in the keen morning air. On the highest point of the islands the lantern of the lighthouse sparkled in the beams of the rising sun, and on the narrow path running down between thickets of lentils and wild absinthe, I saw two or three worthies — hardly larger than sea-mews at that distance — running to meet the boat, their blouses puffed out with the gusts. I gave my letter to the head-keeper, a black-bearded little fellow, bronzed by the sun, whom my visit filled with dismay. They had supposed at first that it was the regular inspection, but their uneasiness augmented when they learned that the mysterious traveller was to take up his quarters there, and that they must give him the state apartment.

During the first days they were suspicious of me. They served my meals in my room, a splendid room, of vast dimensions and high-studded,

with varnished wainscoting and with three windows looking on the open sea; but throughout my visit the north wind has compelled me to keep the iron shutters closed at two of the windows; and I get no light except from the side on which the wind does not blow. These solitary repasts in a room that squinted soon became a bore to me, and I asked the keepers' permission to eat with them. I had brought provisions, preserves and some good eau-de-vie. They offered me dried vegetables and fish provided by Trophime the Provençal, who is very expert at catching shell-fish and scorpions. At the first meal we became well acquainted.

The keepers are men of three very different types, with one passion in common: hatred. How they all three hate one another! When I arrived I began a poem which remained unfinished on the table in my room. The first evening the chief, as he was about to go on duty, said to me warningly: "Don't trust my comrades, don't leave anything lying round." — The next day Bertolo said the same thing; and old Trophime, with Iago's smile, urged me to keep the key of my room on my person. He, however, seems to me the least wild of the three. He has eyes like a lizard, soft and gleaming, and an inoffensive white beard which quivers very funnily when he sings his Provençal ditties. He is a very clever cook, unrivalled in the concoction of *aïoli* and bouillabaisse, is always on the look-out for something for a stew, shoots, fishes, hunts for gulls' eggs among the rocks, and every morning and evening without fail, makes the circuit

of the island to see if the sea has not cast up something worth the taking. Sometimes he has windfalls, among others a certain barrel of rum which is still remembered in the lighthouse.

The other two keepers attend to nothing outside the duties of their position. They are functionaries, members of the government, and they would consider it a derogation of their dignity to turn their hand to anything. I see them all day long playing *la scopa*, a game of cunning and suspicion, in which the hands seek to conceal the cards, in which the eyes keep furtive watch on the opponent. When they are not gambling they are plotting, devising unkind schemes against the other, their comrade. Being men of Corsican temperament, excitable and revengeful, the solitary life develops that natural gloom, and they do not lack time to perfect their vendettas.

Dinelli, the head keeper, who "worked to be a priest," is the only one who is able to read a little. But the lighthouse library is not rich, it consists only of an odd volume of Plutarch, with red edges, which the poor man has been reading over and over for years, imagining the characters in the guise of the elder Dumas's heroes, with rapiers and plumes. He reads principally at night, during his watch, in the lantern. When I see him climbing the little spiral staircase with brass rails, his great red book under his arm, I think of Shakespeare and how Plutarch's narratives echoed in his brain. Not that I attribute to Dinelli so much imagination as to Shakespeare, but his dark chamber is

terribly quick to receive impressions none the less. When we are alone he talks to me about Cato of Utica and Demetrius Phalereus as if they were living persons. The conversation lacks interest. So I prefer to go fishing with my friend Trophime, or else to sit and dream in a hollow among the rocks till the speaking trumpet summons me to dinner. I watch the water, a sail on the horizon, the Corsican coast close at hand, and, in the distance, like a faint line, the island of Asinara.

At this moment, however, it is impossible for me to see anything from the terrace where I sit musing, with my elbows resting on the parapet. Asinara and even Corsica have disappeared. The sea and sky are blended in the darkness. The wind has fallen for a few moments, as it does every evening at this hour. Suddenly, from the depths of the mist, a hoarse shriek reaches my ears, the siren of an ocean liner driven by stress of weather to seek shelter in the roadstead of Ajaccio; she is feeling her way by the point, but I cannot distinguish a mast or funnel. The bellowing of the siren is answered, very near me, beneath my feet, by a long, doleful, indescribable bray, which makes me think of Fenimore Cooper and *The Last of the Mohicans*. It is the neigh of one of the sick horses turned out to pasture on our rock. And I remember my fright the first time that I made the circuit of the island, when two little Corsican ponies suddenly emerged from a thicket of yellow absinthe, with long threads of mucous-like glass wands hanging from their nostrils. It was the corner set apart

for horses with the glanders, a hospital and a cemetery too, for flocks of crows are always circling about over that part of the Sanguinaires, which has since then seemed a dismal place to me.

For some time past, indeed, not that spot alone, but the whole island, and the lighthouse, and the life I am leading here have aroused a feeling of repulsion in me. With this infernal north wind it is impossible to fish any more. No more fish, never any meat. We are reduced to what is called "sea fare." The lighthouse is supplied for six months, so that there is no risk of our exhausting the surplus stock, but there is one thing that we have exhausted — what we had to say to one another. I have imparted all possible information concerning Cato of Utica and Demetrius Phalereus; I know by heart all the stories of bandits, Quastana, Bellacoscia, which Bertolo tells us as he cuts the green tobacco leaves in the hollow of his hand with the great scissors that hang at his belt.

Our meals, which were very animated at first, have become as silent as before my arrival. The mutual antipathies of the poor fellows, their nervous twitchings are beginning to infect me. I look with disgust upon one of them because he comes to the table with dirty hands, upon another because when he eats he mumbles his food like an old goat. I shall eventually reach the hatred state myself.

To-day the dinner was particularly lugubrious; we did not exchange ten words, but what wicked glances! Is it because of the approach of Christmas, of New Year's day, of the pleasant ceremonies

that mark the end of the year? I have never felt such a weight upon my heart as I do to-night. The idea of wishing that I were at the Club at Ajaccio! I would like to see lights, white table-cloths, in a word, to be away from here. When shall I get away, in heaven's name? If the north wind holds on, I am in for it for the whole winter. Meanwhile, that same north wind is blowing harder than ever. A great flash of light passes over my head. They are lighting the lamp. Its glistening wake dances on the waves in the distance, in pink and yellow and greenish scales. It is cold, my pipe is out, I will go inside.

My lamp is waiting for me on the table near the little spiral staircase. Beside it, wide open, lies the log-book, in which each keeper, as he comes down, notes his observations. I am about to go to my room when I hear some one humming a Provençal Christmas carol, a carol familiar to me in my childhood, to a dance tune which blends with the howling of the blast and the distant cannonading of the surf on the breakers:

> Voici le roi Maure
> Avec ses yeux tout trévirés.

I gently open a door, and in the great kitchen with whitewashed walls and floor of black and white tiles, lighted only by the fire on the hearth and the faint glimmer that comes through an open window on the southern side, the only side where there is no wind, I see old Trophime crouching in front of the fire and singing, with his head in his hands.

He apologizes, a little confused: "What can you expect, Monsieur, it's Christmas eve. You're a Provençal like me, and you know what a place this holiday fills in our calendar. When you're alone at such times, you think of the wife and the children."

And lo! he was fairly launched upon the story of his life, of his family.

He married — some twenty-five years ago — in Camargue, at the village of Saintes-Maries. His wife, the widow of a horse-drover, had been left alone, still young, with her little boy. Trophime kept the light of Faraman, not far from Saintes-Maries. They met at a *branding*, one of the exciting cattle hunts that take place in that region, on the sea-shore, where the women, with caps of Arles velvet on their heads, gallop about, spear in hand, on Camargue horses with long white manes. They had lived on in that lovely spot, where the grass is green all the year round, among the ponds to which the red flamingoes come to drink. But one day the boy, who had grown to be a man, married a girl of Ajaccio and settled in Corsica. Thereupon Trophime procured an appointment to the Sanguinaires light, where his wife joined him, for in those days the keepers had their families on the island with them.

And when I said to him: "You must have been much happier then?" Trophime rose and strode up and down the kitchen, waving his arms:

"Happier! — Thunder and guns! It was worse than the galleys, but luckily it only lasted two

years; otherwise we 'd have gone mad. You have seen for yourself, Monsieur, that the best of men can't succeed in understanding each other, living alone on this rock. What's the reason? What infernal deviltry hides in the solitude of these cliffs? However, men can stand it, they manage somehow; hatred does n't show itself openly. But when it comes to the women, nothing will stop them. In order not to interfere with the service of the light, we quartered our families down on the shore, in what there is left of the old pest-house, where there was room enough for our three families, each with its yard and little garden. Ah! Blessed Mother of the Angels! what a life they led there! Such shrieks and caterwauling that you 'd have thought our women were throwing up their insides all day long. My wife, who was the only Frenchwoman and 'continental' as they called her, had to stand off the other two, genuine Corsicans both, who bore her a grudge for her pluck in keeping the house decent, for her well-scrubbed, white linen which she bleached on lines stretched across the garden. She also kept a few hens, which our neighbors' children, a pack of little Corsicans, as bad as their mothers, used to amuse themselves by killing with sticks. As if we were n't the ones who ought to have been ugly, for we had never succeeded in having any children, and that swarm of pretty little brats made our hearts ache.

"All of a sudden, after we had been married fifteen years, the great happiness of having a little one was given to us. Happiness, and plenty of

misery too, as you can imagine, when my turn of duty came and I left my poor Zani all alone, expecting her joy and with no one to help her. Ah! Monsieur, you talk about hatred. When my wife was confined, fate willed that it should be in midwinter. Just such weather as we are having now: the sea in a rage and bucketfuls of water coming into our little cabins in the lazaretto. The midwife at Ajaccio was engaged; but how was she to come in such weather? I fired the gun, hoisted the flag, made all the alarm signals, but it was no use, the boat did n't even show herself. And would you believe that, when the time came, my wife did n't have from her neighbors so much as a word of advice, a glass of water? Such a thing would n't have happened in a tribe of savages? You can imagine me all alone beside that bed of torture and misery, with trembling hands and eyes blinded with tears. Luckily, He who was born on Christmas night in the straw of a stable watches from on high over all nests, and in spite of the unkindness of her fellow-creatures and fate a lovely little girl came to us straight from Paradise; she's ten years old now and her mother is bringing her up like a good Provençale. At this moment they are both in Ajaccio, getting ready for the midnight mass. Then, after the mass, the boy who is waiting for them at the house will light the yule log with them, singing Saboli's carols, our great Avignon musician. That 's what I was thinking about when you came in, Monsieur."

At this point, the old keeper, who has been

walking back and forth as he talks, halts in front of the fire and gazes at it without speaking. He is in Ajaccio with his family; and I am thinking of that fever of hatred, a strange form of malaria which thrives in solitude, and of which I myself feel the mysterious chill. I imagine the lazaretto in the days of the three families, those battles of women and children and hens, the slaughter in the little cabins.

The great clock in the lighthouse strikes eleven. We hear the sound of a heavy weight, of a chain unwinding. Footsteps heavy with sleep scuffle over the tiles; it is the relief. The kitchen door opens; Bertolo comes in to drink at the basin before going up to begin his watch. He casts a black, suspicious glance at us: "What plot are those two hatching here, without a light?"— Then, wiping his closely-shaven lips with the sleeve of his *pelone*, he takes from the table the great red pipe and the lamp he has placed there, and leaves the room with a "Good-night, *pinsouti*" (Frenchman), which lacks cordiality. When Dinelli, the head-keeper, after signing the log-book, has double-locked himself into his room, Trophime comes to me, with his finger on his lips, and whispers low, with a merry light in his eyes and a silent laugh which makes his pointed goat-like beard dance: "We will water the yule-log, too — we will lay the *cachefeu*, as they say in Provence; I 'll show you."

He climbs through the window, which is on a level with the ground on that side, and in a moment

returns with a tamarind root which he throws on the hearth. Then he takes from the cupboard and places on the table one by one, three candles, glasses, a bottle of Frontignan and a Christmas loaf with aniseed, baked expressly for the occasion; and he does it all with an air of merriment, with sundry winks and much mysterious and childlike pantomime which amuse me.

Now the candles are lighted, the golden brown, well-rounded loaf on a plate and the Frontignan like liquid honey in our glasses. — "One moment?" says Trophime, arresting my arm just as I am about to drink; and having watered with white wine the tamarind root, as crooked and twisted as the root of a vine, he tosses it into the fire with these sacramental words: "Merrily! merrily! may Our Lord give you joy! If, in the coming year, we be no more, O God, grant that we be no less — blaze, log, blaze!"

The log snaps and sends its flame up to the ceiling. The golden wine gleams in our glasses, and we drink to Provence, taking up the Christmas carol he was singing just now, the procession of the Magian kings before the manger of the Child Jesus:

Voici le roi Maure
Avec ses yeux trévirés;
L'enfant Jésus pleure,
Le roi n'ose pas entrer.

Joseph lui fait signe
D'entrer sans cérémonie,
Voir Notre Seigneur
Qui les attendait.

" C'est pas la négrure
C'est pas ça qui le fait pleurer
C'est que l'imposture,
Du vieux péché." [1]

Thereupon fresh bumpers, followed by another carol, the arrival of the shepherds and their offering to the little Jesus:

Ils laissent à terre deux ou trois bons fromages,
Ils laissent à terre une douzaine d'œufs;
Joseph leur dit: " Allons, soyez bien sages,
Tournez-vous en et faits bon voyage,
Bergers,
Prenez votre congé." [2]

Our voices ascend, echo under the arches, and a delicious sense of well-being gradually overspreads my whole being, the tension of my nerves

[1] Behold the Moorish King
With his eyes all red with weeping;
The Child Jesus weeps,
The king dares not go in.

Joseph motions to him
To enter without ceremony,
To see Our Lord
Who was awaiting them.

" It is not the dark skin,
That makes him weep,
It is the imposture
Of the ancient sin."

[2] They left on the ground two or three fine cheeses,
They left on the ground a dozen of eggs;
Joseph said to them: " Be ye wise,
Turn ye, and God be with you,
Shepherds,
Take now your leave."

is relaxed. Those carols, that wine from my province! — I am no longer in the lighthouse on the Sanguinares, but in the kitchen of a great Provençal *mas*, with whitewashed walls and a floor paved with great flagstones. Outside, instead of the roaring of the wind and sea, I can clearly distinguish in the wintry darkness the bells pealing merrily for the midnight mass. I imagine dark figures passing and repassing behind the brightly lighted panes. Clouds of sparks ascend from gaily-decorated roofs and vanish in the cold, star-strewn sky. Merrily! merrily! May Our Lord give you joy!

The carol is at an end. Old Trophime has risen, the strain upon his nerves relaxed and his face beaming. He cuts a slice of bread, of the delicious bread wherein the aniseed and the warm dough are made more savory by the Christmas thought, fills a glass to the brim with golden wine, places the whole upon a plate, and blinking his little half-shut eyes at me, says:

"Dinelli is sleeping too sound for me to wake him, but Bertolo's pipe must make him thirsty. I am going up to drink with him."

Worthy man! I hear his heavy boots ascend the little staircase, then the window of the lantern cage opening, and loud laughter and happy exclamations to which the light is not accustomed. They are drinking up there; I will do as they do. Merrily! merrily! On the lighthouse rock of the Sanguinaires Christmas has banished hatred, for at least one whole night.

THE BRISE-CAILLOUX.

(1815.)

WHEN Napoleon, after Waterloo, went to the island of Aix, on the eve of placing himself in the hands of the English, a naval lieutenant named Vildieu offered to take him to America through the English lines. This Vildieu was an ardent Bonapartist and an excellent sailor, having made a special study of the management of small boats in the open sea; he was ready to answer for his *Brise-Cailloux*, and would undertake to go to the ends of the earth with her.

The Emperor listened to all that he had to say, walking back and forth without speaking; at last he stopped, gazed at the sea for a few moments, then shook his head; the answer was "no."

The Vildieu scheme did not inspire confidence; he preferred to give himself up to the English.

A few months later Lieutenant Vildieu, who had taken his refusal very much to heart, determined to prove that there was nothing impracticable about his plan of escape, and he started for America on the same little vessel he had offered Napoléon, with two midshipmen who had resigned from the service, the younger being his own son. They had a long, hard passage. The *Brise-Cailloux* had been carefully fitted out with fresh water in

casks, dried pemmican and biscuit. Fresh meat was not to be thought of, for a hen-coop would have covered half of the deck; down to the very last day the provisions were served out with the rarest forethought, and the crew did not suffer severely. However, that diet of salt meat became tiresome at last, their mouths were parched, they were thirsty; but, thirsty or not, they had two rations of water a day, never more. Once, when the sea was like oil, something round floated alongside the vessel.

"An apple on the starboard side!" joyfully exclaimed the man at the helm. It was an apple, a lovely gray *reinette* in mid-ocean. Doubtless it had fallen from some vessel that had passed that spot a day or two before; they offered it to the captain, but like a good prince he insisted on sharing it with the crew. Although somewhat injured by the salt water, the apple was voted delicious, and that day there was feasting on board the *Brise-Cailloux.*

Although the voyage had its pleasant moments, unpleasant ones were not lacking: squalls, days of dense fog, nights of violent hurricanes, without sleep. Sometimes, when the sea was too high, they lashed the tiller, lowered the sail, took refuge between decks and trusted in God!

At last, after six weeks at sea, they sighted the American coast; it was high time, for they were running short of water. A few hours later the *Brise-Cailloux* entered the harbor of Halifax, I think it was.

"Ouf! I have arrived," said the tiny craft, and as there was too much water in the roadstead for

her cable, she made fast to the side of a frigate that was lying at anchor. The big ship stared at her in amazement.

"Where are you from?" was the cry.

Our three heroes proudly bared their heads.

"From France!"

No one would believe it, for such a voyage had never before been attempted.

The younger M. Vildieu, the last survivor of the crew of the *Brise-Cailloux*, told me the true story of that expedition one winter evening several years ago. The midshipman of 1816 had become an old seaman in the customs service, just about to retire on a pension, but still passionately fond of the sea. He often took me with him on his trips, and we saw some very pretty ructions together.

One evening, as it looked like heavy weather, we had run into a little cove on the Sardinian coast near Bonifacio, for shelter. What a night! what a divine spot! In the distance, charcoal burners from Lucca had built their fires among the rocks; nearer at hand a company of Neapolitan coral-fishermen were singing as they mended their nets. Then there was the bright, soaring flare of our camp fire reflected in the water, the sailors lying all around it, the fragrant bouillabaisse smoking over it, and standing with his back to the blaze, with his white moustache, his toothless but kindly smile, his little gray eyes sparkling with mischief and heroism, M. Vildieu telling us of the wanderings of the *Brise-Cailloux*.

He was the typical deep-sea sailor, that Vildieu. He had made his first voyage at the age of seven; and since then had been always at sea or on the coast. He had been in eighteen shipwrecks; but what he did not tell us was the number of lives he had saved with his Newfoundland's instinct. A certain life-line gun, which he had invented and which he dreamed of seeing on every revenue cutter on the coast, constantly made its appearance in the conversation. He had sent a description of his famous invention to Paris a long while before and was greatly surprised that the Academy of Sciences was so dilatory in replying to him. That was the only depressing incident in his life. Otherwise his was the most charming old age imaginable, and in danger he always had a jest on his lips. When the sea became really wicked he had a fashion of shouting cheerily: "Stand by the sheets, boys, she's going to dip her nose in the vinegar!" which would make your flesh creep. And, in the midst of a squall, if he saw me clinging to something on deck, gazing vaguely at the sky, and holding my Marseille pipe between my teeth tight enough to break it, although it had been out for an hour, he would whisper in my ear: "Don't be afraid, shipmate, you're with a deep-sea sailor. I shall be drowned some day, but it will be in the ocean."

He kept his word. M. Vildieu died one night on the coast of Bretagne, while trying to assist a coaster in distress. Ah! the poor old man! If only he had had his life-line gun!

THE FÊTE OF THE ROOFS.

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

I.

OH! how the roofs of Paris shone that night! What silence, what peace, what supernatural brilliancy! Below, the streets were black with mud, the river heavy with ice; the melancholy gas-jets were drowned in the flooded gutters. Above, as far as the eye could see, on palaces, towers, terraces, cupolas, on the slender steeple of Sainte-Chapelle and those myriads of sloping roofs, bowing to one another, the snow spread its glistening blankets, all white with a glint of blue; and it was like a second Paris, an aerial city suspended between the dark void below and the fantastic light of the moon.

Although it was still early, all the fires were out, there was no smoke floating above the roofs. The happy chimneys, however, those in which the wood snaps and sparkles every day, were easily recognizable by the wider circle of black around them caused by the heat, and by their warm breath rising into the frozen air like the breath of the sleeping house. The others, rigid and closely surrounded by snow, still held nests of the pre-

ceding spring, devoid of heat and light like themselves. And in that elevated city, benumbed by its white blanket, which the streets of Paris intersected in every direction like immense crevasses, the shadows of all those chimneys of unequal height, jagged and black like trees in winter, formed an inextricable network over deserted avenues where no one had ever walked save the Parisian sparrows, whose sharply defined, jumping footprints scratched the frozen surface of the snow here and there. At that very moment a band of these impudent little gypsies was fluttering about the edge of a gutter, and their cries alone broke the religious silence, the solemn suspense of the roof city, entirely covered as it was with a carpet of ermine as if for the passage of a child-king.

THE SPARROWS OF PARIS.

Deary me! how cold it is! Impossible to sleep. In vain do we roll ourselves up in balls and bristle up our feathers; the frost wakes us and stings us.

A SPARROW, *in the distance.*

Oho! you fellows, oho! — come quickly, I have found an old chimney with an iron cap, in which the fire must have burned late. We can keep nice and warm by huddling close to it.

THE WHOLE FLOCK, *flying toward him.*

Ah! that is true. How comfortable this is! How warm it is — it's nothing to say it now. *Vive la joie! Piou, piou! Cui, cui, cui!*

THE CHIMNEY.

Will you hold your tongues, you little rascals! Nobody but you would dare to make so much noise at such a moment, when everyone is meditating in silence. See! even the wind is holding his breath. Not a weathercock stirs.

THE SPARROWS, *in a lower tone.*

What 's the matter with the old lady, anyway?

THE CHIMNEY.

What! don't you know that to-night is the fête of the roofs? Don't you know that Christmas is coming to distribute his gifts to the children?

THE SPARROWS.

King Christmas?

THE CHIMNEY.

To be sure. If you could see all the little shoes standing in rows before the warm ashes in the houses below! There are shoes of all shapes and sizes, from the tiny slippers of the little feet which totter as they walk, to the little boots which echo so loudly and fill the whole house with their clatter; from the fur-lined shoe to the little clogs of the poor, to the shoes that are too large for the little bare feet they cover, as if the poor were of no age and had no right to be children.

THE SPARROWS.

At what time will this wonderful little fellow come?

THE CHIMNEY.

Why now, at midnight. Hush! listen.

THE CLOCK, *in a solemn voice.*

Dan — dan — dan —

THE CHIMNEY.

See how the whole sky is lighting up yonder!

THE SPARROWS, *with the gaping enthusiasm of little Parisians watching a display of fireworks.*

Oh! *chic!*

THE CLOCK, *continuing.*

Dan — dan — dan — Midnight!

II.

No sooner has the clock struck the last stroke of twelve than a great chorus of bells rings out on all sides at once. From the snow-capped towers they clang merrily on the level of the roofs and as if for them alone, alternating and blending their voices, merry chimes with booming bass, approaching, receding, with the increasing and diminishing volume of sound, which is due to the force and direction of the wind and gives the impression of a steeple revolving like the lantern of a lighthouse.

THE BELLS.

Boom, boom! — Here he comes! 'T is he, 't is little King Christmas.

THE WIND.

Hu-hu. Ring out, brave bells, with all your might, ring louder. Christmas is here, he comes with me. Do you smell that sweet odor of green holly, of incense, of perfumed wax which I bring on my wings?

THE CHIMES.

Ding, dong, ding. Ding, dong, ding. Christmas! Christmas!

THE WIND.

Come, chimneys! What are you doing there with your mouths wide open? Sing a Christmas song with me. Sing, roofs, sing, weathercocks!

THE CHIMNEYS.

Ui-ui. Christmas! Christmas!

THE WEATHERCOCKS.

Cra-Cra. Christmas! Christmas!

A TILE, *too enthusiastic.*

Christmas! Chri— (*In its joy it gives a leap and falls into the street.*) *Patatras!* Bing!

THE SPARROWS.

What a row!

THE CHIMNEY.

Well, sparrows, have you nothing to say?

THE SPARROWS.

Piou, piou, piou. Cui, cui, cui. Christmas! Christmas!

THE CHIMNEY.

Climb up on my shoulder. You can see better there.

THE SPARROWS, *on the chimney.*

Thanks, old lady. Oh! how pretty it is, how pretty it is! All those pink, green and blue lights dancing over the roofs.

THE CHIMNEY.

In that procession of baskets filled with toys, ribbons, flowers, bonbons, the whole Parisian winter passes before us surrounded with gilding and bright colors.

THE SPARROWS.

Who are all those little men carrying baskets? Are they all King Christmases?

THE CHIMNEY.

Oh no! They 're the kobolds.

THE SPARROWS.

What do you say? — the — ?

THE CHIMNEY.

The kobolds, that is to say the familiar spirits of every house, who guide Christmas to all the chimneys where there are little shoes waiting.

THE SPARROWS.

But where is Christmas himself?

THE CHIMNEY.

He is the last one of all, that fair-haired little fellow with such soft eyes, with his hair floating around his head in golden beams like wisps of straw from his manger, and his cheeks red with the cold air. See how he walks: his feet just graze the snow without leaving any mark.

THE SPARROWS.

How lovely he is! One would say it was a picture.

THE CHIMNEY.

Hush! listen.

III.

AT that moment a grave youthful voice, as rippling as a baby's laugh, rang out in the crystal atmosphere which intense cold and bright moonlight produce on elevated spots. The Child-King had halted on a terraced roof, and standing there, surrounded by all his little basket-bearers, he spoke thus to his people:

CHRISTMAS.

Good-evening, roofs. Good-evening, my old bell-towers. The night is so light that I can see you all scattered about me in this great Paris that I love so dearly. Ah! yes, my Paris, I love you,

because you, who laugh at everything, have never yet laughed at little Christmas; because you, who believe in nothing, believe in him. And so, you see, I come every year. I have never failed. I even came during the siege, do you remember? It was very depressing, on my word. No fire, no light, the chimneys all cold; the shells whistling over my head, making holes in the roofs, overturning chimneys. And then there were so many little children missing! I had too many toys that year; I carried away whole basketfuls. I am happy to think that I shall have none left to-night. I was warned that I should have many little shoes to fill. So I have brought some marvellous playthings, and all French.

A SPARROW.

Bravo! I like the little fellow.

ALL THE SPARROWS.

Piou, piou — Cui-cui. Vive Christmas!

A FLOCK OF STORKS, *flying overhead in a long triangle.*

Oua oua. Vive Christmas!

THE WIND, *stirring up the snow.*

Come, sing in honor of Christmas, too!

THE SNOW, *in a very low voice.*

I cannot, but I do homage to him. Look at those clouds of fine white dust with which I sur-

round the baskets and fill my little king's fair locks. We two have known each other a long, long while. Remember that I saw him born, far away, in his little stable.

THE WIND, THE BELLS, THE CHIMNEYS, *singing together with all their force.*

Christmas! Christmas! *Vive* Christmas!

CHRISTMAS.

Not so loud, my friends, not so loud. You must n't wake all our little people below. The pleasure that comes to one when sleeping, unlooked for, is so sweet! — Now, Messieurs Kobolds come with me over the sloping roofs; we will begin our distribution. But this year I have determined to try an experiment. All the loveliest things we have, toys, gold polichinellos, satin bags full of sugared almonds and dolls in lace dresses, I propose to have you drop into the poorest shoes, down the fireless chimneys, in the cold attic rooms; and, on the other hand, all these little one-sou toys, which smell of resin and pine, are to be dropped into the wealthy houses on the velvet carpets and the thick furs.

THE SPARROWS OF PARIS.

Splendid, splendid! That 's an excellent idea.

THE KOBOLDS.

Pardon us, little Christmas. Under your new system the poor children will be happy but the

rich ones will cry. And you know a crying child is neither rich nor poor. He's a crying child; and there is nothing so sad.

CHRISTMAS.

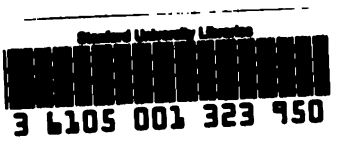
Nonsense. I know better than you. The poor children will be overjoyed to possess these complicated playthings which are so tempting to them in the shop-windows and whose gilded splendor adds nothing to their value as toys, to their capacity for amusement. But I will wager that the little rich children will be quite as glad to have for once jumping-jacks at the end of a string, dolls with springs and all the tempting wares of the thirteen-sou shops which they have never entered. So let it be as I say. Off with you now, and make haste. There are so many chimneys in Paris, and the night is so short!

IV.

THEREUPON the little lights scattered in all directions, as if all the lighted branches of a Christmas tree had been shaken over the snow on the roofs. Not a chimney was forgotten, from the palaces surrounded by terraces and trees white with frost, to the poverty-stricken roofs which seem to act as props to one another to avoid crumbling beneath the burden. Soon, on all the houses in Paris, could be heard the tinkling of little bells and all the varied, fantastic noises that rend the air in toy-

shops, the bleating of lambs, the stuttering of dolls, the rustling of embroidered satins, rattles, trumpets, drums, trundling post-horses, the crack of the postilion's whip, the creaking of the wings of a windmill. All these noises ran hither and thither, leaped into the chimneys and vanished. Where there were no children, Christmas, guided by his kobolds, hurried by, never going astray; but sometimes, as he approached a chimney with his hands full, it would whisper with its black mouth! "He is dead, they are useless. No little shoes in the house now. Keep your toys, my little king. It would make his mother weep to see them."

For a long, long time the lights fluttered about thus. Suddenly a rooster with a cold crowed somewhere in the fog, a streak of daylight shot across the sky and all the Christmas magic instantly vanished. The fête of the roofs was at an end, the fête of the houses was beginning. Already a sweet, fascinating murmur came up through the chimneys with the smoke of the relighted fires. There were shrieks of delight, wild laughter, children's voices taking their turn at crying: "Christmas! Christmas! *Vive* Christmas!" while the sun rising over the deserted roofs, a beautiful winter's sun, of a rosy hue and enormously large, shed upon them his first beams, which, as they fell upon the glistening snow, resembled bits of metal, mother-of-pearl and gold fringe dropped from the little king's baskets.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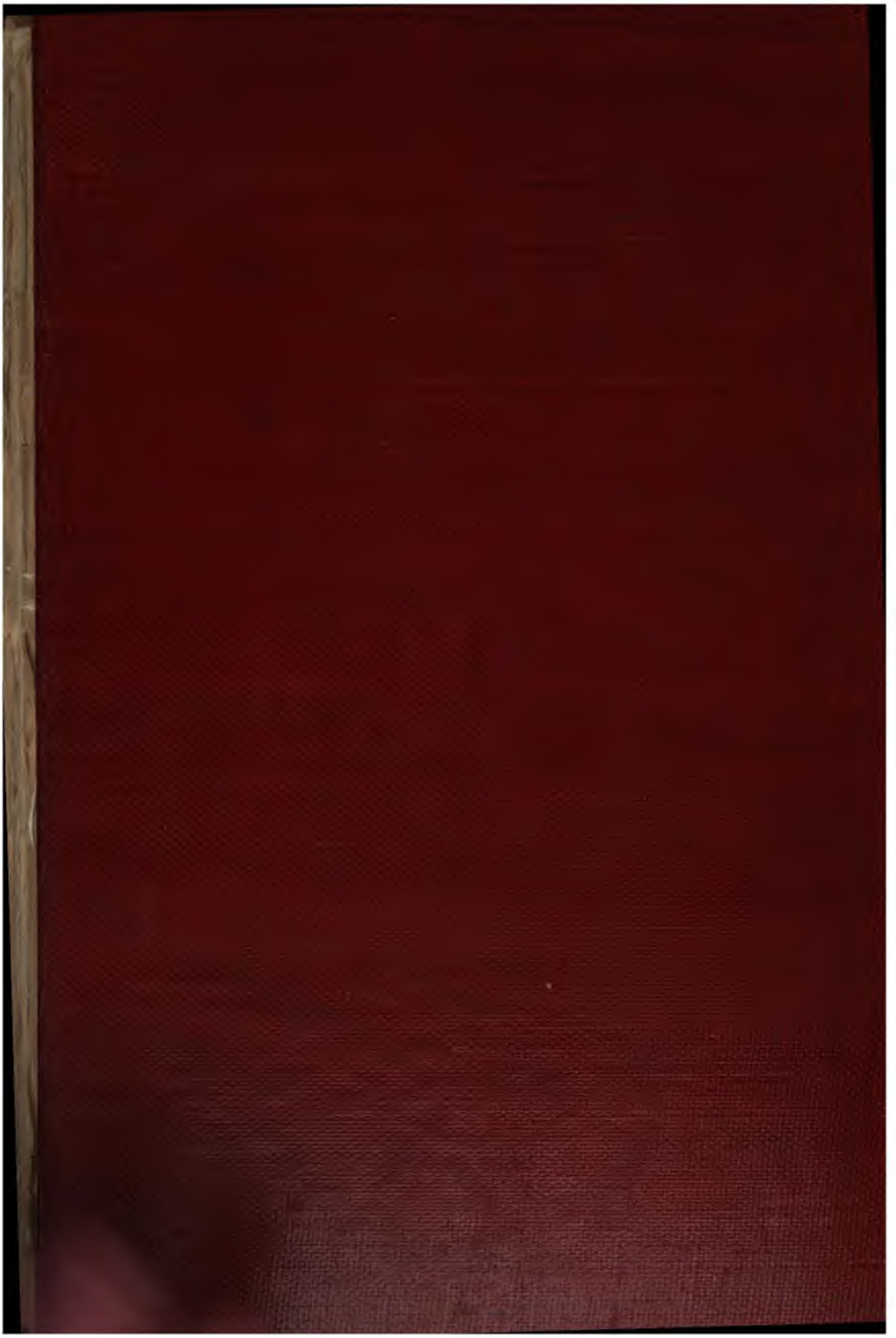
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